

**JOHANN FRIEDRICH ALBRECHT BÖHM**

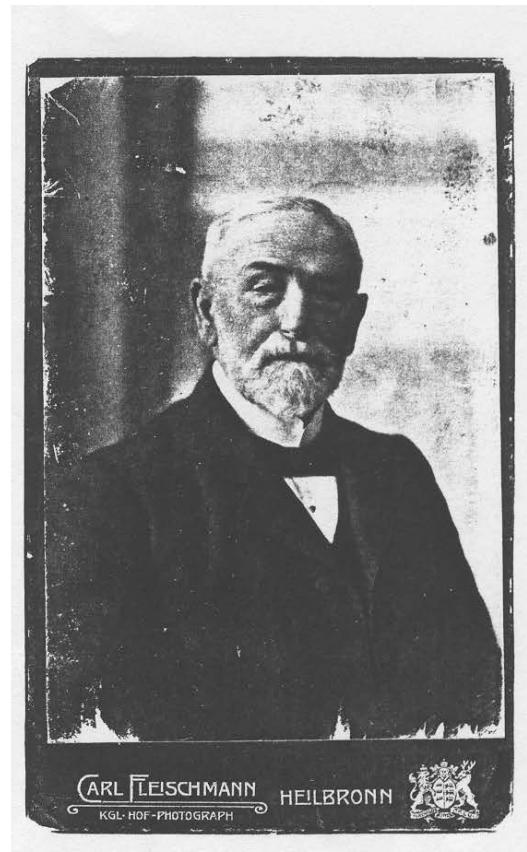
**1833 B 1918**

**The life and work of a pioneer missionary  
in South West Africa**

**JOHANN LOMBARD  
HEDWIG LOMBARD**

**Dedicated to the memory of Herman Claassens**

*Johan Albrecht Friedrich Böhm*  
22.12.1833 to 15.05.1918



*Maria Catharina Böhm (née Hahl)*  
02.05.1836 to 09.02.1899



## PREFACE

Shortly after the death of my cousin Herman Claassens, his widow Marjorie, in accordance with one of his last wishes, presented us with a small briefcase containing letters our grandmother Hedwig Venter (née Böhm) had received from her parents in the period 1884 to 1918, as well as various other letters and a few old photographs. Although the letters are difficult to read because the handwriting was Gothic, Herman had taken the trouble to have them typed.

Little was done about the letters until 1987, when we visited South West Africa and retraced the steps of great-grandfather Böhm. The trip reawakened my interest, and I decided to translate the letters into Afrikaans. Johan, my husband, assisted me in my research. He then took it upon himself to compile the following account of my great-grandfather's life.

Various members of the family contributed details to enable us to complete the picture: inputs were received from Kate Pelton (nee Schaible) , California, USA; Johannes Böhm, Mannheim, Germany; Irene Stiel (née Böhm), Den Haag, Netherlands; and Editha Thomas (nee Schlimm), Essex, England. Valuable information was also obtained from the State Archives in Windhoek. Unfortunately, a lack of funds prevented us from visiting the Rhenish Mission Society's archives at Barmen.

We are indebted to my sister-in-law, Leonie Matthysen, for the translation of the narrative into English, and to Wim Stiel for the German translation.

The account is intended for great-grandfather Böhm's descendants in South Africa, the USA and Europe, and I trust that everyone will enjoy reading it.

Hedwig Lombard

Louis Trichardt, RSA  
7 September 1989

## CONTENTS

		<i>Page</i>
Chapter	1      Preparing for his vocation	1
	2      Land of his vocation	6
	3      Salem 1864-1867	11
	4      Ameib (!Am-eib) 1867-1880	17
	5      Otjimbingwe 1880-1881	25
	6      Walvis Bay 1881-1907	27
	7      Europe 1907-1918	41
	Literature	44

## Chapter 1

### PREPARING FOR HIS VOCATION

Johann Friedrich Albrecht Böhm's ordination as a missionary on October 1863, at the Institute of the Rhenish Mission Society, Barmen, marked the realisation of a long-cherished dream. He looked forward with much anticipation, but also some trepidation, to the work for which he believed the Lord had called him. There was little time to meditate, however, since he was due to leave for Africa B that dark continent about which he had heard so much B two days after being ordained. Little did he know at the time that nearly 44 years would elapse before he would again set foot on German soil!

At the prospect of the uncertain future, he prayed earnestly: "O God, let Your goodness and love, which You have proved to me in Christ, my Saviour, always be before my eyes. Strengthen my resolve to devote my entire life to You, comfort me in times of pain, lead me in times of happiness and banish from my heart any fear of the future." In reaching this landmark, Böhm had already surmounted several obstacles and gained considerable experience.

According to official documents, Johann Friedrich Albrecht Böhm was born on 22 December 1833, at Michelbach am Walt, Oberamt Öhringen, Württemberg. In his diaries, however, he gives his date of birth as the 21st of December. He was the elder of two illegitimate sons born to Johann Jacob Böhm and Rosina Christina Birk. Johann Jacob made a living as a brush-maker, while Rosina was the daughter of a manservant in Grünbüll, near Lohe. Böhm was christened on 26 December 1833. His father died less than three years later, on 17 December 1836, when his younger brother was only seven months old. Böhm's mother, who was 23 years younger than his father, eventually married and had other children. For some years, however, she reared the two boys single-handedly, and although the family never starved, she battled desperately to make ends meet.

Once at school, Böhm soon developed a love for books and devoured lengthy sections of the Bible. He was especially fascinated by the book of Daniel, in spite of the fact that he understood very little of it, much to the annoyance of his mother, who was unable to answer all his questions about the book. The fourteen-year-old Böhm was confirmed in 1847, but little initially came of his professed desire to lead a pious existence.

He was called up by the army in 1854, but did not take to military life. He objected in particular to the propagation of violence, and developed such a negative attitude towards the army that he even spent a while in detention. Although at times still concerned about his spiritual life, during this period of his life Böhm became largely indifferent towards religion. He no longer read his Bible and ceased going to church.

After his discharge from the army, Böhm stayed on in Heilbronn for a while, before entering the service of a certain Herr Hauck in Stuttgart. Hauck, a decent and pious man, took Böhm into his home and introduced him to pietism, a mystical Protestant movement to which he and many other German Christians belonged. At first, Böhm attended church only to please his employer, but in time his interest in spiritual matters induced him to buy a Bible.

In an account of his early years, which he had compiled for the Rhenish Mission Society, Böhm stated: "I no longer wished in the first place to be pious, but pleaded with fear in my heart for mercy and forgiveness. I needed a Saviour and a Redeemer. ... Soon I was able to call Jesus my Saviour and, although my faith was still shaky, He gave me more light every day. ... I spent glorious evenings in my quiet little attic room, while Sundays were a feast!"

His zeal impelled him to proclaim his newly found faith. "I was naive enough to believe that I could convert anyone, provided I approached him or her correctly. Whenever I had the opportunity B and an enthusiastic new convert is able to find ample opportunities B I reasoned with people about my Saviour, about their sins and about the sad state of their souls. Although I regret to admit that my efforts had little impact, they were not completely futile, since God was glorified in the process."

In the pietist circles in which Böhm now moved, mission work acquired a new importance. He took a special interest in the activities of the Basel Mission Society in India. In 1857, thirty-eight missionaries and their families, as well as a considerable number of Indian Christians, were killed in the Indian uprising, an event that shocked religious groups in Western Europe and contributed to Böhm's resolve to become a missionary.

The obstacles, however, were many. He lacked the necessary funds to further his studies and, moreover, was under the impression that as a twenty-four-year-old he was too old to be admitted to training. He also believed that he did not meet the requirements for becoming a missionary B requirements described as follows in *Christliebs Schrift*, a book circulating at the time:

"Required above all is a firm belief in God, ... a certainty that the Gospel will prevail. The missionary must completely surrender himself to the affairs of the Holy Kingdom. He needs the power of prayer so that he may plead for renewed strength and hope in his darkest hours; also, a personal commitment so that he may resist major temptations and set an example for heathens and Christians alike. He must be enterprising and resolute, and possess the necessary presence of mind to sustain him under the most trying circumstances. He must exhibit a spirit of sacrifice, practise self-denial and must be long-suffering. He should never draw comparisons with the comforts of Europe. To preach effectively, he must be articulate and have a good command of the language, and he should be able to reason logically. Furthermore, he should not only have a sound knowledge of the Bible and be well versed in theology and general science, but should also be a born teacher. He should be diplomatic, a keen observer and discriminatory. He should also be hard-working, patient and persevering. He should be practical, so that he may influence others through his personal advice and assistance." Böhm's reaction is understandable: "I felt completely unworthy of such a holy calling."

It must have been at about this time that he met Maria Catharina Hahl, his future wife. Catharina, the daughter of a brewer, was born on 2 May 1836 at Münchingen, Leonberg. She had a fine voice, loved music and, as a refined middle-class young lady, was well read. It is clear from a letter written many years later to her daughter Hedwig that it was she and Böhm's employer Hauck who had prevailed on him to qualify as a missionary.

Böhm also attended talks on missionary work by a missionary named Kapff. These lectures so inspired him that he paid Kapff a visit and informed him of his ideals. Kapff advised him to contact the head of the Mission Institute at Barmen. In 1858, Böhm was eventually admitted to the Institute, where he commenced his training for the Rhenish Mission Society under the tutorship of Fabri and Von Rohden. Upon being admitted, Böhm entered the following prayer in his diary: "Faithful Lord, I commit myself to Your care, now and in the future. Govern my life and lend me Your strength to extend to others the joyful invitation to join Your Kingdom. Lend me Your peace. Please promise me this, faithful Lord."

The Rhenish Mission Society was founded after the merger of the Cologne, Wesel and Barmen Mission Societies. The Barmen Mission Society had established a training institute for missionaries as far back as 1825.

Its first students, Johann G Leipoldt, Daniel Lückhoff, Theobald von Wurmb and Gustav Zahn, were ordained on 4 July 1829, and sent to South Africa the following day.

The Barmen Mission Institute trained missionaries specifically for the Rhenish and Westphalian Mission Societies, and also artisans, such as carpenters, masons and smiths, who were prepared to serve in the mission fields. The Institute expanded rapidly. Considerable extensions to its facilities in Böhm's time made it Barmen's largest and most imposing building.

Two days after his ordination on 3 October 1863, Böhm left Barmen for the harbour city of Bremen on the first leg of his long journey to Southern Africa. He did not travel alone, but formed part of a large group of people destined for the mission fields in South West Africa, later renamed Namibia. The group included the wagon smith Eduard Halbich and his fiancée Amalie Bartels, who would later settle at Otjimbingwe; Franz Tamm, a carpenter and builder, also on his way to Otjimbingwe; and the eldest two daughters of the missionary Kleinschmidt, Elizabeth and Maria, as well as a younger sister. Sophie Teufel and Johanna Knab were both on their way to marry the missionaries Schröder and (later Dr) Brincker, respectively.

A coloured woman by the name of Julie also accompanied the group.



*Böhm as a young man*

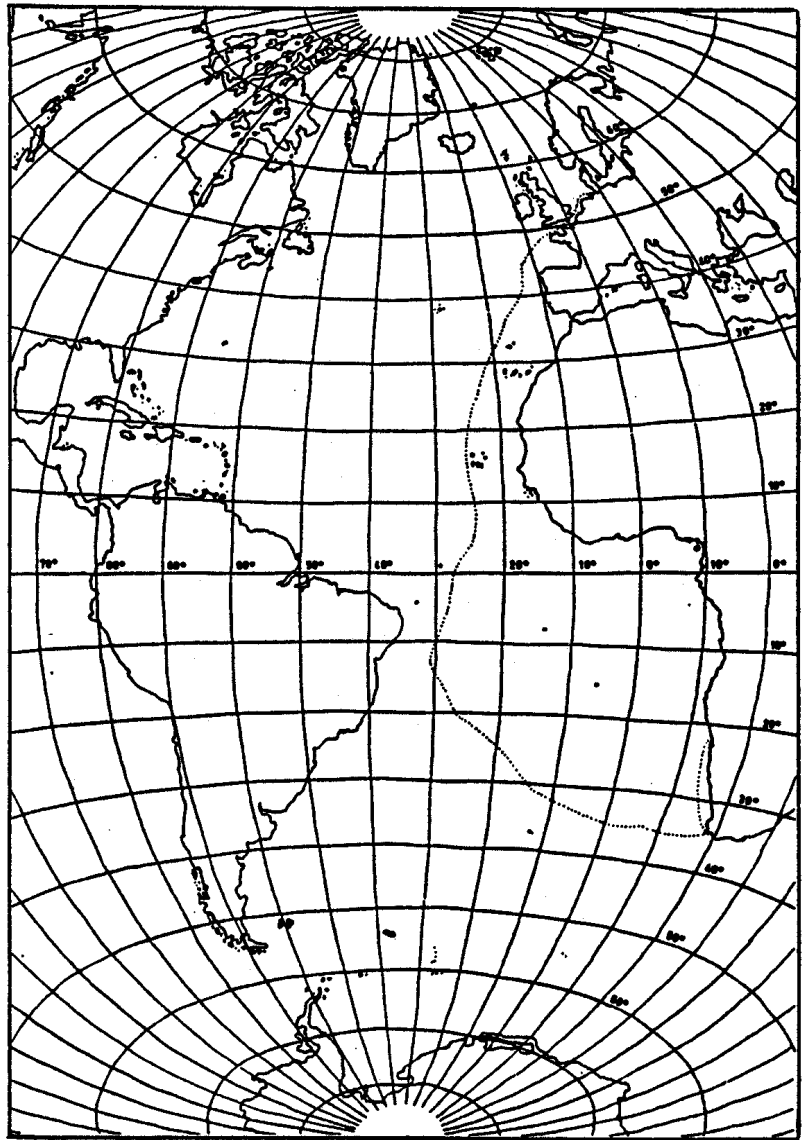
They were joined in Bremen by the missionary (later Dr) Carl Hugo Hahn (1818-1895) and his family. He had first arrived in South West Africa in 1824 to work among the Hereros in the vicinity of Windhoek. In a relatively short period he had mastered the Herero language and compiled a Herero grammar. He had been visiting Germany on long leave from 1859 to 1863, and was now returning to South West Africa, amongst others to establish a training school for ministers and evangelists at Otjimbingwe.

The group boarded the sailship *Emma* and departed from Bremen on 8 October 1863. The voyagers experienced choppy seas virtually from the outset, and soon all were violently seasick. On Sunday 11 October Hahn managed, however, to conduct a service for the twenty-six passengers and crew. The next day, the group began to study Dutch and Herero, using Hahn's Herero grammar. Böhm was ultimately able to speak fluent Dutch and Nama, but it is not clear how well he fared with Herero.

Strong headwinds slowed down the *Emma's* progress, and the ship was blown off course several times. They sighted the coast of England only on 15 October, and crossed the equator on 21 November. Strong winds subsequently again blew them off course to the west, but at last, on 17 December 1863, to the great joy of everyone on board, Table Mountain emerged on the horizon.



"At last, yes, there it was beneath the white cloud. Soon one could see it more clearly: the Table Mountain with its big head on top! After our midday meal we took another look. Oh, how beautiful! How the heart beats! Before us lay the bay where the large, stately ships lay at anchor. Behind the bay one could see houses, and at the foot of the mountain, along the coast, the magnificent country houses of Cape Town's rich. Oh, how lovely, how joyfully beats our hearts B land! After 70 days, land again, the land of our new home, land of our labour in the name of the Gospel, the wonderful, longed-for vocation."

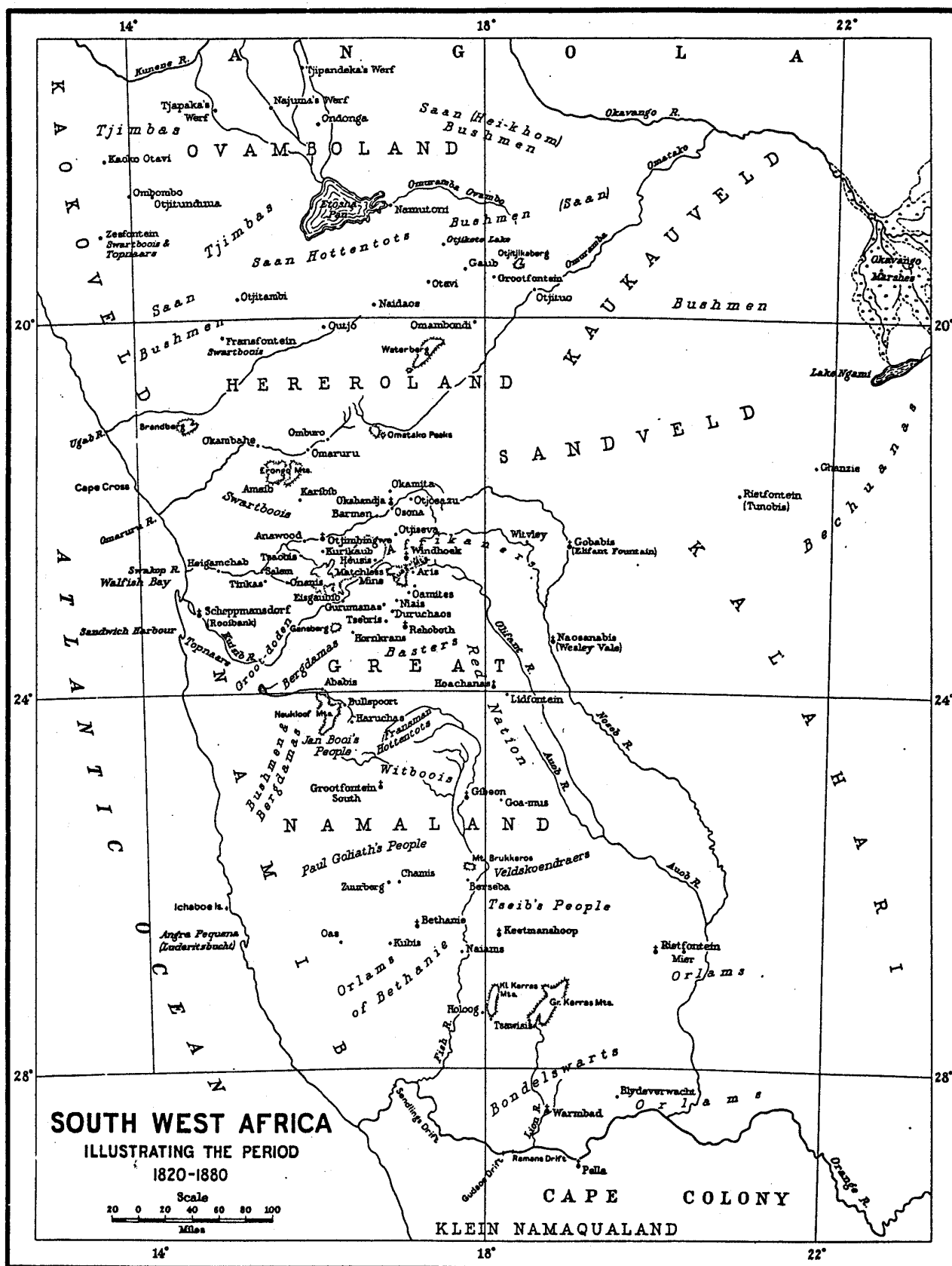


*The Emma's route from  
Bremen, Germany, To Cape  
Town and Walvis Bay*

J Böhm

The group went ashore the same afternoon, and departed for Stellenbosch the next day to rest for a few days. After reboarding the *Emma* at Cape Town, they finally reached Walvis Bay on Saturday 9 January 1864. Although their arrival was supposed to have been announced with a three-gun salute, one of the cannons failed, and only two shots were heard. Amongst those to welcome them at the quay were the missionaries Kleinschmidt, Brincker and Eggert.

On his arrival, Böhm formulated the following prayer: "We have all arrived safely and well. For that I thank and praise You, Lord, my God and Saviour. Help me, O Lord, to serve You with a faithful heart."



## Chapter 2

### LAND OF HIS VOCATION

Böhm had finally reached South West Africa B the country where he was destined to work in the name of the Gospel. His first impressions of Walvis Bay must have been daunting. According to a travelogue compiled by Kurd Schwabe, who landed there in about 1900 with a group of soldiers, and then followed more or less the same route as Böhm into the interior, Walvis Bay epitomised solitude and desolation. Although relatively sheltered from the wind, the small bay was devoid of vegetation. A solid, sandy plain stretched inland as far as the eye could see. To the right, the desert consisted simply of a flat plain, while to the left massive sand dunes loomed over the small bay. A few shacks hugged the shore, bathed in the shimmering white light that is so typical of desert landscapes. There was no fresh water, and the nearest source of potable water was located some five kilometres inland.

The Kuiseb River to the south of Walvis Bay consists for the most part of a wide, dry sandbed. The river itself does not empty into the sea, but loses itself in a sandy delta.

Walvis Bay is, and always has been, simply one more arid spot in a parched country. The coastal belt, which varies in width between 100 and 150 km, is made up mainly of the barren Namib Desert, the oldest desert in the world, characterised by gigantic sand dunes, which in places reach to the sea. The eastern part of the country forms part of the Kalahari Desert, and the only habitable area lies between the two deserts. The entire southern region of Namibia is a semidesert, and it is only in the north that water and vegetation are abundant.

Namibia is an extensive territory, with a land mass of 832 145 sq km. It is larger than the United Kingdom, West Germany, Italy and the Lowlands combined. Towards the end of the eighteenth century it was still largely unexplored and shrouded in mystery. Although sparsely populated, the territory accommodated a great many population groups, who differed considerably as regards language, culture and ethnic origin. Since many of these groups were made up of nomadic tribes, it is difficult to delineate the areas they inhabited.

Two large black tribes, the Ovambos and the Kavangos, occupied the northern part of the country, which adjoins Angola. The Hereros lived to the south, between the Ovamboland boundary and the Swakop River. Like their northern neighbours, they were of Negroid origin. They engaged mainly in stock-farming, moving often with their cattle in search of water and grazing.

The Khoi-khoi (Hottentots) comprised a number of widely heterogeneous groups, which constantly engaged in intertribal strife and raids on one another. They fell into three main groups, each of whom spoke a different Nama dialect: the Namas, the Oorlams and the Nama-speaking San tribes (Bushmen).

The Namas, in turn, could be subdivided into a number of minor tribes, which had little in common. The most important tribes were the Rooinasie, the Bondelswarts, the Groot Dooden, the Topnaars, the Veldskoendraers, and the Swartboois.

The Oorlams were Khoi-khoins who had left the Cape in small numbers, for reasons that included a quest for freedom, or escape from the police. Their leaders were mostly of mixed European and Khoi-khoi origin. The best-known tribes were the Afrikaners, the Lamberts and the Witboois. All the Khoi-khoi tribes, including the Oorlams, initially inhabited the area bounded by the Orange and the Swakop Rivers. Most of them also owned herds of livestock. The leader of the Oorlams was called Jonker Afrikaner, also known as the Napoleon of

South West Africa. The Nama-speaking San comprised mainly the Swarttrivier Bushmen, Naron and Heikum tribes, but also included a number of San tribes who did not speak Nama, but had their own languages and dialects. The San's hunting grounds lay to the east of the Etosha pan, and to the west of the Botswana border.

The Bergdamaras (Damaras, Bergdamas), another major group, occupied mainly the eastern part of the country to the north of Walvis Bay. Although displaying certain physical Negroid features, they were not of Negroid origin. They spoke Nama and were neither linguistically nor culturally related to the black tribes of the north. The most important tribes included the Sanddune Dama, the Swakop Dama, the Kuiseb Dama, the Erongo Dama and the Brandberg Dama.

A late addition to this rich assortment of peoples was the coloureds, who had also crossed the Cape border in search of freedom. They were of mixed origin and proud to be called Bastards (Bastards). They spoke a Dutch dialect, retained the surnames of their white forbears, and were on the whole more Westernised than the Oorlams. These latecomers to the South West African scene settled in the Rehoboth region around 1870.

At more or less the same time (1870), whites entered South West Africa in small numbers from the Cape Colony. Constant tribal warfare, and the Hereros' fear that white farmers from the Transvaal would occupy the territory, drew the attention of the world's major powers to South West Africa. In response to various appeals, notably by the Herero chief Maharero, Great Britain annexed Walvis Bay and the surrounding territory in 1878. In 1883, Germans obtained cessions of land at Lüderitz, and these parcels of land were subsequently put under the protection of the German empire. The Germans' sphere of influence and authority eventually encompassed the whole of South West Africa, with the exception of Walvis Bay.

At the time of Böhm's arrival in the territory, towards the middle of the nineteenth century, it was difficult to say who actually ruled the country. Jonker, Maharero and Witbooi enjoyed great prominence, but their sphere of influence was limited largely to their own tribes. They were virtually entirely dependent on white traders for supplies of guns and ammunition, which they received in exchange for livestock. As a rule, the British government enforced law and order from as far afield as Cape Town, especially in cases where whites were the victims.

Envoys of the Cape government, such as Galton, Palgrave and Andersson, were generally held in high regard, but they succeeded only partly in preserving intertribal peace, and then only for as long as they were physically present in the territory.

According to Dr H H Vedder (1876-1972), missionary, linguist, author, and later senator of South West Africa, it was the missionaries who unlocked the territory and brought it to the attention of the world. They not only brought religion to the people but, true to the spirit of their time, regarded it as their duty to establish Western civilisation among the indigenous tribes. Through close observation and careful recording, these missionaries (Böhm included) compiled the first geographical, meteorological and ethnological notes on the territory. The missionaries had a profound impact on the morals of the tribal chiefs and their subjects. They often succeeded in settling differences between hostile groups. The mission stations were viewed, on the whole, as neutral territory, and on more than one occasion victims of raids and persecutions sought refuge at a mission station.

The territory and its primitive peoples made inhuman demands on the missionaries, and the work called for great sacrifices. The missionaries had to live on what the land could offer them. In many cases this consisted only of nothing more than a small amount of corn that had been sown during the rainy season,

only to be stolen from them at harvest time. Cut off from civilisation, they were often forced to exchange their clothes for provisions, while letters from Europe could take as long as two years to reach them.

What opportunities did this harsh desert country, with its nomadic and war-thirsty tribes, present for spiritual work, and how did the missionaries set about their task? Vedder describes four methods that were commonly employed by the early German missionaries.

The first method entailed assimilating with the nomads, and roaming with them. Schmelen, for example, went about in skins and did without bread for more than seven years, eating only what his congregants consumed. This expedient did not yield satisfactory results. A second method entailed working only among the more settled tribes. However, during times of drought these people, too, moved away. Some missionaries experimented with a third approach, in which agriculture was employed as a means of settling tribes. These missionaries introduced the first ploughs to the territory. The extremely dry climate precluded sustained irrigation, however, and the indigenous peoples were not accustomed to the strenuous manual labour involved. In the fourth, and most successful, method the missionary selected an area suited to agriculture, where a tribe could settle more or less permanently, having to move away temporarily only when drought forced the inhabitants to seek better grazing and sustenance. In seeking to evangelise the indigenous peoples, the missionaries thus tried to accommodate both the climate and tribal customs.

The London Missionary Society was responsible for sending the first missionaries to South West Africa. They were the Albrecht brothers, who in 1802 established stations at the present-day Warmbad and Blydeverwacht. They were originally invited to the region by the then Oorlams leader, Jager Afrikaner. Schmelen, also affiliated to the London Missionary Society, arrived in 1814, and established a mission station at Bethanie.

In 1820 the Wesleyan Mission Society dispatched two workers, Barnabas Shaw and William Threlfell, to the Warmbad region, where intertribal strife seriously hampered their work. The London Missionary Society, and later also the Wesleyan Missionary Society, withdrew from the territory in 1840, turning over their activities to the Rhenish Mission Society, which had in the previous year already assigned the missionary Kleinschmidt to the Herero tribes in the Rehoboth region. In 1842 Hahn began working among the Hereros in and around Windhoek. By 1850 the Rhenish Mission Society had already established a number of mission stations, of which Otjimbingwe was the largest and most important.

Upon arriving at Walvis Bay in 1864, Böhm prepared to travel to Otjimbingwe. It took several days to offload the ship and prepare the wagons and gear for the trek into the interior.

"Walvis Bay, 17 January 1864, ten 'o clock at night by candlelight in an ox-wagon, my bedroom. Thank the Lord, for he is merciful and his mercy is eternal. As poor as I am, I have been made rich in the Lord. ...The past week ... was one of strenuous work but, thank the Lord, without mishap, and now all our things have been offloaded. The natives were quite willing to help but they are clumsy and we had to carry the heaviest goods ourselves. At night, my hands smarted as if I had transported hot coals."

The party, taking with them eight wagons, each pulled by either fourteen or sixteen oxen, departed for Otjimbingwe only on 25 January. Otjimbingwe is situated some 90 kilometres northeast of Walvis Bay, as the crow flies. Vedder estimated that it must have taken an ox-wagon 63 hours of uninterrupted travel to cover the distance between Walvis Bay and Otjimbingwe.

Otjimbingwe owes its existence to the presence of a desert spring, where the Hereros congregated. A mission station was established there in 1849 by the missionary Johannes Rath, who named the region the Richtersveld, after the first director of the Rhenish Mission Society, Dr J Richter. This name is still frequently used to denote the area around Otjimbingwe.

In the wake of the copious rains of 1850, a large number of Hereros settled at Otjimbingwe, so that the mission work flourished, and it became possible to begin with the construction of a church building. Later, a few traders also settled in the area. Rath was succeeded in 1864 by Hugo Hahn, who cherished the ideal of establishing a German missionary colony at Otjimbingwe that would exemplify a Christian community in South West Africa. The colony chose as its motto "Pray and work". Artisans recruited in Germany trained young Herero men in various crafts. To this end, the families Halbich, Baumann, Tamm and Felling settled at Otjimbingwe.

Hahn was also instructed to establish a theological school at Otjimbingwe, mainly with a view to educating the chiefs' sons. The school, which opened in 1866 with six pupils, was named the Augustineum in honour of the German princess Augusta, who had made a generous donation to this end.

The journey to Otjimbingwe was arduous, and for the most part followed the beds of minor and major rivers, notably the Swakop. Twenty-six years later, Schwabe gave the following account of his trek along the same route:

"We entered the Namib Desert, journeying northwards, always along the Swakop River, having to descend into its canyon each day to obtain water for man and beast. We traversed an extensive, empty, endless landscape. It was indescribably monotonous & barren plains devoid of vegetation, broken by straggling, low mountain ranges. There was not even a single green spot on which to rest the eyes; band upon band of yellow, the formidable landscape shimmered under the bright glare of the sun. At noon, with the sun at its zenith, a tremendous, oppressive heatwave descended upon the sea of sand & a heat reflected by billions of glistening grains of sand. One could hardly breathe, yearning only for the evening with its shade.

All along this desert route we came across the skeletons of oxen that had been abandoned by earlier wagon treks. Most evenings we descended along the high, bizarre rock walls of the river gorge to where the raging and seething yellow-brown torrent cut its way to the sea. The descent was hazardous and took as long as two hours, since we had to take with us food, bedding and eating utensils. The wagons ... remained at the top ... but the draught animals and slaughter stock also had to be driven down to the river for water.

Down by the river the view was wide and pleasant. Before us lay the towering rock walls, broken by deep ravines. Low bushes covered the river banks ... while higher up grew dense clusters of Ana and thorn trees. We wasted little time in cooking and eating our food, and soon everyone and everything fell into a deep sleep under the bright starlit sky & the quiet of the night broken only by the rippling and murmuring of the water, the muffled tread of the sentries, the intermittent neighing of a horse and the cries of a hungry jackal. The fires died down gradually. Such a landscape, bathed in the faint, bluish light of the moon and stars, is indelibly imprinted on the mind of anyone who has experienced it."

Schwabe's description obviously refers to a trek during the rainy season. Usually, the journey had to be undertaken when the river was dry and surface water was nonexistent. This forced travellers to dig, with varying degrees of success, in the river bed for water.

On March 3, Böhm and his party arrived at Heigamchab, home of the missionary Eggert. The oxen were able to graze in the bed of the Swakop. An entry in Böhm's diary reads: "The landscape is breathtakingly beautiful. Ragged cliffs loom on both sides of the gorge. At present the river has only a little water and dense vegetation covers both river banks."

A week later, on 9 March, they reached Onanis, village of the Nama chief Jacobus Boois, and held a service for the inhabitants. Jacobus had earlier broken away from the large Nama tribe headed by his father at Bethanie, taking part of the tribe with him. They formed a rapacious group who roamed far and wide, and just happened to be at Onanis when Böhm's party arrived there. Boois told Böhm that he and his tribe would like to settle somewhere, and also that they required the services of a missionary. The tribe included several people who had previously been christened by the missionaries Kleinschmidt and Knudsen.

Böhm's trek then proceeded to Otjimbingwe, arriving there on 12 March 1864. They were enthusiastically welcomed, particularly by the missionary Schröder, who had been waiting there for his bride for more than a week. The couple were married three days later. The day after the wedding it was decided that Böhm would return to Onanis to work among Boois's tribe.



## Chapter 3

### SALEM 1864-1867

Böhm must have proceeded immediately once the decision had been made, because he arrived at Onanis for the second time on 20 March, this time alone: "Dear Lord, You have taken me under Your wing and You provide for me. You are with me. Your rod and Your staff comfort me. For all this I thank and praise You."

Böhm began his life task the very same evening by holding his first service for Jacobus Boois's Namas. He had by that time probably mastered some Dutch, which the Namas could understand. His sermon dealt with Simeon, who took the child Jesus in his arms and praised God, saying: "Lord, as You have promised, You now dismiss Your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen Your salvation." .

Böhm described the service in the following words: "I told them: 'There may be those among you, old and young, who had a similar experience to that of Simeon. God is hereby keeping his promise to them and is allowing them to see Jesus and His salvation through me, whom He has sent to them ... They should know that whatever they do for me, they also do for God. They are thus able to take God in their arms ...'. Everyone listened with rapt attention."

A few days later, on 23 March, Böhm and some of the tribe went in search of a suitable terrain for a tribal centre. They required adequate living space, but more especially sufficient water and flat ground for the cultivation of crops. They found a good spot on the bank of the Swakop, some 105 km from Walvis Bay and 78 km from Otjimbingwe, on the route between the two settlements. Böhm decided to name the mission station Salem (Peace).

Schwabe provided the following description of the area around Salem: "Here the southern rock walls of the Swakop recede slightly, revealing a beautiful valley on either side of the river. Clumps of high Ana trees, dense wild tobacco bushes, castor-oil bushes and thorny shrubs, even a few date palms are to be seen. In fact, the vegetation is quite lush. On the river banks there is pasture land covered by quick-grass and virtually impenetrable clumps of reeds and bulrushes. At the top of the rocks and on the plains one finds flowers and meadow-grass. The birds along the river include pigeons and all kinds of wildfowl."

Construction commenced immediately, and the first building to be completed was a house for Böhm. He was able to move in on 7 April, having had to sleep underneath a tree until then. The next task on the agenda was to lay out a vegetable garden.

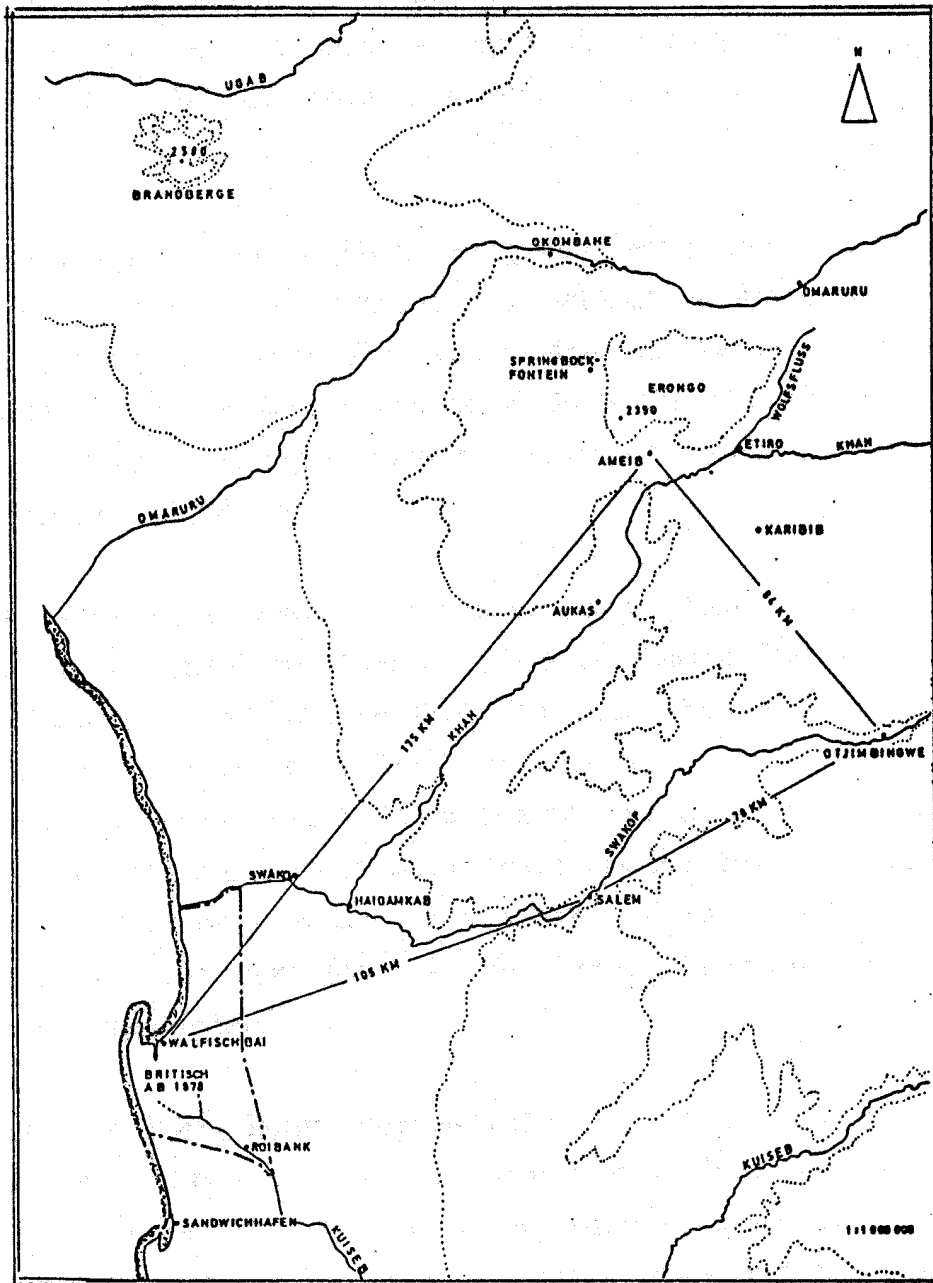
"Saturday, 7 May 1864. I have had little sleep for the last two nights. On Thursday I saw a very big snake in the house and could not get it outside. In the end it crept into and hid in the rushes with which the roof is thatched. Apart from that, the house is swarming with mice, which often wake me from my light slumber. It is easy to say 'I believe', but pressing behind comes the sigh: 'O Lord, help my unbelief' ."

Böhm was satisfied with the spiritual progress being made. People diligently turned out for the services and listened attentively. Various individuals had come to confess their sins, and indicated that they would like to become Christians. On 6 June the chief's son Jacobus also confessed, and soon quite a number of people were ready to attend confirmation classes.

However, the people were beset by fears, and from time to time there were rumours of an impending attack on the settlement. On 4 July the men brought Böhm poisoned arrows that had been shot at the settlement the previous night. Although nobody had been injured, the attack gave rise to considerable alarm, and it was decided that during the following night all the men would lie in wait around the settlement. "At the evening devotions, only women were present. I recounted the defeat of Sennacherib at Jerusalem. All the same, I ensured that my rifle was in working order ."

On Monday, 19 September, Böhm started with the school. Two classes were arranged, and Böhm was especially gratified by the presence of one of the chief's sons. The children were eager to learn Dutch. Böhm found this exhausting, since he could not speak Nama, and his Dutch still left much to be desired.

Within a short time, however, school had to be suspended. The chief, Jacobus Boois, became restless. The tribesmen no longer wanted to work in the fields without remuneration. Even the children demanded compensation for attending school. Böhm gained the impression that some individuals attended church only to beg, which made things very difficult for him: "Now that they have taken everything from me, so that I am obliged to live extremely frugally, they complain among themselves about my not wanting to give them anything."



"The people who help with the building of the school eat at my place. I must not complain about their low productivity, because they are simply not used to sustained hard work. If only they were satisfied with what

they receive! When the work began, I promised the labourers a cup of tea daily. Soon they came and asked for coffee (the tea didn't agree with them) so I gave them coffee. Then they asked for tobacco, which I now give them daily. Then they asked for rice, then meat, because they had nothing to eat. I gave them this twice daily, each time 2 lbs of meat weighed, and some rice, and let them see to the preparation for themselves. After that they came and said that when they had finished work they were tired and hungry, I should give them some cooked food. I did so. Now they get coffee in the morning, and a cooked meal at midday. After their midday break they get tea; in the evening cooked food again plus their ration of tobacco. Now the tobacco, too, is bad: I gave them Cayic peasant tobacco, but they want American tobacco, which here costs about three to five shillings a pound. I definitely refused this request and now nothing they get is any good. They say they are helping me with my work. Quite calmly I answer them: 'I am helping you with your work. You are a Christian community, you need the school. I don't need it; I could easily shelter in the shade during Divine Service, but you would be out in the burning sun. It is your duty to do what is in your power and therefore please be satisfied with what I give you, which is already more than I can afford.' "

"Begging is no disgrace here, but working is."

"Some declared outright that since the missionary no longer gave them tea, coffee, sugar and so on, they had no reason for coming to the mission station."

"It will soon be necessary for me to live like them, on milk and meat, and wearing skins, to convince them that I am poor. I have told them this already several times, but they just laugh and shake their heads as at something incomprehensible. Nevertheless it has come to that already as far as eating is concerned. Last week I made fire only three times to brew some coffee and the third time I baked a small loaf of bread. Otherwise I lived entirely on milk. Still, the Lord be thanked, I feel quite happy (although sometimes a little lonely) because I believe that my Saviour is doing this to me in order to further my salvation."

It had now become apparent that Jacobus Boois and his people were incapable of living in one place for any significant length of time. Moreover, Böhm was unable to tend the garden by himself, and neglect soon set in. The corn was growing well, but once the grazing had deteriorated the Namas simply drove their cattle into the cornfields. Shortly afterwards, Jacobus and his subjects moved away from Salem, returning to the district of Bethanie. For a time they roamed there and in the vicinity of the Kuiseb River.

One again picks up their trail in 1867, and it is interesting to note what became of these first of Böhm's protégées. Jacobus Boois and his son-in-law, Jan Jonker, with whom he had fallen out earlier, were reconciled in November 1867. Together they launched several raids. They attacked Otjimbingwe on the night of 11 December 1867, but met with courageous resistance on the part of the Hereros. The attack was repelled, but not without heavy casualties on both sides. On 22 December they also attacked Salem, where Böhm had by this time gathered around him another tribe, the Swartboois. This attack, too, was repelled. Boois and Jonker then moved on to Heigamchab, where the missionary Eggert was living. They murdered Eggert's herdsman and captured all the livestock. Eggert fled with his family over the dunes to Sandwich Harbour, where they boarded a ship for Cape Town.

From Heigamchab the still unsatisfied marauders made for Walvis Bay, where they looted Andersson's store and murdered Iverson, another trader. The gang then marched on to Rooibank, where they destroyed the printing press and stole the type to make bullets.

A number of petitions were presented to the Cape government, requesting protection against Jacobus Boois and Jan Jonker and their gang of robbers. In response, Sir PG Wodehouse authorised the dispatch of a warship to Walvis Bay, where it anchored on 18 June 1868, but since there was nobody there to show them the way into the interior, the soldiers and their ship had to return to Cape Town without accomplishing anything.

In November 1868, the Hereros under Maharero ambushed Jonker and Boois with their men near Okahandja, virtually wiping them out. Jacobus Boois managed to escape, but died soon afterwards. The surviving widows and children went to live with another Nama tribe, thus marking the end of Jacobus Boois's tribe.

Böhm was left at Salem in 1864 with only a small group of faithful congregants. After their numbers had been swelled by a few Bergdamaras, he could once again open the school and begin with confirmation classes.

"2 December 1864. I have been teaching at the school now for four weeks and my pupils still do not know the alphabet. They can only rattle it off in parrot fashion, but as soon as I question them at random they do not know even a single letter. ...They do not know the numbers from 1 to 10 either; some cannot even count to 5 in either Nama or Dutch. ...The Nama learn a little better but I do not know what to do with the Bergdamaras. O Lord, give me patience and wisdom and never-tiring love."

Towards the end of the year, Böhm met with a number of Swartboois who had travelled from the Rehoboth region. He responded to their invitation by paying them a visit in January 1865. They formed part of the first tribe to settle permanently in Namaland and called themselves the Rooinasie (Red Nation), on account of their dull red complexions. The tribe had expanded over the years, and some of them had settled in the Rehoboth region. This tribe was known as the Swartboois, after the name of their leader, Willem Swartbooï.

Kleinschmidt started to do missionary work among the Swartboois in May 1845. His congregation included eleven adults and six children who had been baptised earlier, most of them by Schmelen. The baptised included the chief's wife, Annatjie, a devoted and kind Christian woman. Willem himself was baptised the following year, in 1846, and a beautiful church building was erected at Rehoboth. Kleinschmidt's mission flourished, and the membership of his church soon exceeded five hundred.

In May 1864, four Nama chiefs, including Jan Jonker, planned to attack Rehoboth with six hundred men to punish the chief Willem Swartbooï for refusing to participate in a raid on the Hereros. The attack was repulsed, but in retaliation Willem Swartbooï concluded a peace treaty with the Hereros. On 22 June 1864, the four chiefs suffered a crushing defeat near Windhoek at the hands of the allies and their men.

Jan Jonker was incensed, and conspired with Hendrik Ses to teach the Swartboois a lesson. The Swartboois realised the danger of remaining at Rehoboth, and moved away in July 1864 in search of a new settlement. Kleinschmidt accompanied them. They reached the Kuiseb River on 16 August, where they received news two days later that Jan Jonker was on their track and about to attack them. They used the twenty-five wagons to form a fortified lager, leaving all their possessions and the women and children in the wagons. The men took up their positions against the mountain side in order better to defend themselves.

Long dry grass surrounded the wagons, for the rains had been especially good in 1864. Hendrik Ses then set the grass alight, burning down all the wagons, and the goods in them. More than thirty women and children perished in the flames, while the number of men killed was never ascertained. Kleinschmidt and his family fled to Otjimbingwe, where they arrived at daybreak on 31 August.

The attack left the Swartboois destitute and homeless. They roamed about in the vicinity of Otjimbingwe for a while, where they were visited by Böhm. They could not settle there permanently, since the Hereros under Maharero were already living at Otjimbingwe. Other sites lacked sufficient water and agricultural land. In April 1865 the tribe decided to move to Salem, in the lower Swakop valley, so providing Böhm with a new congregation and the opportunity to re-establish his mission.

Böhm diligently set about restoring the gardens and the lands. A day in the life of the missionary generally proceeded thus: He rose at dawn and, after washing and dressing, prayed quietly by himself and read a section of the Bible. This was followed by supervision of the domestic staff and the ordering of tasks. Next, he held morning prayers with the community. Manual work followed until nine or ten o'clock, whereafter he had breakfast. Breakfast was followed by two hours of Bible study and language lessons. He then took time off for the afternoon rest, and devoted forty-five minutes to music, until quarter to two. School lasted until four o'clock, followed by manual work until supper, which was usually eaten at dusk. After supper, he held evening school, took care of his correspondence and wrote in his diary. At about nine o'clock he again said prayers by himself and read the Bible before going to bed.

Since Böhm had exhausted his supplies, he left for Heigamchab on 12 July to see whether he could do some trading. On his arrival, he heard that a ship containing letters and a parcel addressed to him had docked in Walvis Bay. One of the letters was from the secretary of the Rhenish Mission Society to inform him that his engagement to Catharina Hahl had been approved and that she would join him in late summer.

"May the Lord lead her safely to me, to His Honour and our salvation, now and forever more."

Using Salem as his base, Böhm frequently visited nomadic tribes in the vicinity to bring the Gospel to them. Sometimes he did so at their invitation. Towards the middle of August 1865 he decided to travel to the Erongo mountains, partly in response to an invitation and partly to trade for some cattle, since his supplies of meat, milk, and fathad been depleted.

"That a missionary here has to be a trader on his journeys does not seem odd, for how else can he live? One buys cattle for slaughter and pays with goods. For this purpose I have with me some unbleached calico for shirts, moleskin for trousers, as well as several dozens of knives, spoons and tinder-boxes."

At first, the group travelled along the Swakop valley. On Sunday 20 August, they met a number of Bergdamaras for whom Böhm arranged a service. The Bergdamaras also spoke Nama, but it was no easy task to deliver a sermon, for though Böhm could understand the language quite adequately, its pronunciation still presented difficulties.

"The most difficult aspect of the language is not the clicks, but the correct intonation of the vowels, which in identical sounding words have to be sounded either low or high, and long or short."

After church, he handed out the customary tobacco and coffee. Böhm and his companions then turned away from the Swakop River, travelling along the Dorps River in the direction of the Kan River. Their journey took them along the Kan valley, eventually turning westwards in the direction of the Erongo Mountains. On 27 August they reached a vlei (small marsh), an unusual phenomenon in the southern region of Namibia.

Böhm described the vlei at Ameib, where he would eventually settle between 1867 and 1880, and where six of his children would be born, as follows: "Towards the north and west are the chief rock masses of the mountain

range, towards the southeast our tracks, and towards the south open hilly country as far as the eye can see ... completely covered with fine water-grass and water running all over. ...The water is whitish opaque and tastes slightly sweet, but is fresh in many places and not unpleasant to drink. The soil, which I cut with a spade in various places, appears to be mixed with chalk and looks black, probably as a result of rotten vegetable matter. In places the grass is so dense that it is impenetrable."

After having visited the spring from which the vlei derived its water, Böhm and his companions started their return journey on 30 January. Along the way, they visited several Nama settlements, holding services for the inhabitants. They arrived back at the mission station on 7 September, exactly three weeks after their departure.

February 1866 was a memorable month, since Böhm's fiancée, Catharina Hahl, arrived in Walvis Bay on the 25th. She had travelled to South Africa the previous year, where she had been staying with the missionary Daniel Lückhoff in Stellenbosch to learn some English and Dutch. The missionary Vollmer married the couple at Walvis Bay on 25 February 1866.

"Through God's great goodness I was allowed today to embrace my dear bride, and in the afternoon to call her my wife, after we had been united in holy matrimony in the name of the Trinity ."

After the wedding, the newly-weds left per ox-wagon for Salem, arriving there on 7 March. Two weeks later the young Mrs Böhm began a sewing school for the women on the settlement. Although there is no written record of Catharina's initial impressions and experiences, the young, refined German woman must have found the parched desert land, with its atmosphere of desolation, its lack of amenities, its primitive peoples, and its harsh climate daunting, to say the least. It is apparent from a note made by Böhm in April 1866 that Africa had exacted its toll virtually immediately: "My dear wife nearly died of fever, but by the grace of God has recovered." This was but one of numerous attacks of malaria which brought members of the family down over the years.

Their first child, Johannes Jakob, was born on 17 December 1866. The couple had, in the interim, transferred to Otjimbingwe, where Böhm had temporarily deputised for Hahn, who was visiting Ovamboland for the second time.

The years 1863 to 1866 saw good rains, and the Swakop River at Salem had sufficient water for all the settlement's inhabitants and their animals, as well as for irrigating the crops. However, in the late summer of 1866, the rain stayed away, causing the crops to wither, and seriously depleting the drinking water. Soon, even grazing was nonexistent.

At the beginning of 1867, it had become apparent that the Swartboois could no longer survive at Salem, and a decision was made to move to Ameib. The first group left in March 1867 to make essential arrangements. Böhm and the remainder of the tribe moved in July.

## Chapter 4

### AMEIB (!AM-EIB) 1867-1880

"On Monday, the 15th of July 1867, I arrived here from Salem with my dear wife and little son Johannes. Brother Tamm, whom I had brought here a few months earlier to get a home ready, had two rooms completed and a third nearly finished. May the Lord bless him for the faithfulness and diligence he has shown, and may He also bless the two Bergdamaras who helped him with the work. The people of the Swartboois tribe are not all here yet, but most of them were at the service yesterday, the fifth Sunday after Trinity. O Lord, bless me and let Your word grow strong, grant that through me, the weak tool, Your work may be done, to the rich and eternal blessing of the whole tribe."

Böhm and his family therefore had a place to stay upon arriving, but that was about all. Services had to be held under a tree, and Böhm was naturally eager to begin with the erection of a church building. Building operations could not commence immediately, however, for the men first wanted to go hunting. They were particularly keen on shooting some lion, which had already killed ten head of cattle on the settlement since their arrival at Ameib. They returned on 23 August, having shot fifty-four ostriches but no lion. Only then did they begin to make bricks in earnest and to prepare fields for planting. There was no money for building materials, since the Mission Society paid their missionaries only a stipend, maintaining that in all other matters they were supposed to be self-sufficient. In this period Böhm applied his entire stipend towards the purchase of building materials and to wages, in an attempt to complete the small church, which was inaugurated on November 10.

According to Böhm's meticulous records, he had baptised altogether 220 adults since his arrival at Salem. Of these, 66 had subsequently died, 69 had moved away, including those who had left with Jacobus Boois, and a number had been excommunicated, so that in 1867 only 75 of his congregants were permitted to celebrate Holy Communion. In this period he had also baptised 513 children.

"Dear Lord, how the numbers of the holy have dwindled!"

It was indeed hard work among a hard people! But this was not all. Together with the battle against unbelief and heathenism, there was the never-ending battle against nature. During 1869, drought in its severest form struck again. Water holes dried up, and the people had to take their cattle in search of water and grazing. Only a few women and children remained behind at Ameib with the missionary and his family. At the end of the year, the school had only twelve children left, including some Nama children who were lodging with the Böhms. At Christmas, Böhm managed to obtain a few bags of flour and rice, so that they were able to cook soup for the neediest among them.

The drought was so bad that predators, especially hyenas, ventured onto the settlement in search of food. Some of them even entered the huts, trying to grab the children, and in some instances skin clothing was torn off people's bodies. The Bergdamaras, driven by hunger, descended from the mountains. At night, marauders attacked some of the outposts, murdering the herdsmen and looting the livestock.

Böhm wrote: "When we arrived here three years ago, water and grazing were plentiful. Now only thorns and thistles are left. We cannot keep any cows. The people have only a few goats left. Our own few cows graze some three to four hours' journey from here in an old riverbed, which still contains some moisture and grass. We have to fetch milk from there daily for our children. Things are no better ... at the outposts. Have mercy on



us, O Lord. Build and expand Your nation." The following year, fortunately, conditions improved slightly, and some of the Swartboois returned to Ameib.

Böhm did not work solely among the Swartboois. From the outset he had taken a special interest in the Bergdamaras (also known as Damaras or Damas), and established a particular bond with this group. Towards the middle of the previous century, an estimated 20 000 Bergdamaras were dispersed over a wide area in the western part of the country, south of the Etosha pan, and north of Walvis Bay. Depending on where they lived, they were referred to as the Sanddune Damaras, the Kuiseb Damaras, the Erongo Damaras, and so on. Their scattered and highly primitive mode of existence, and the fact that they were not politically united, made them extremely vulnerable to marauders.

Ethnologically, they formed part of the Nama-speaking San, and as such they were despised and oppressed by Namas and Hereros alike. Heinrich Driessler, in his work *Die Rheinische Mission in Südwestafrika*, relates that nothing could make a Herero laugh more than the remark that the Bergdamaras were human, just like them. Some Christianised Hereros even refused to sit next to a Damara in church.

In 1870, the Bergdamaras of Omaruru were attacked, robbed and dispersed by the Hereros. Hugo Hahn intervened and persuaded the Hereros to allow the Bergdamaras to settle lower down in the Omaruru River valley, at Okombahe, a spot some 60 km northeast of Ameib. A group of about three hundred, led by Daniel Cloete, subsequently settled at Okombahe, where through remarkable industry they endeavoured to ensure a decent living for themselves.

At Okombahe they were able to lead a quiet existence, since for the first time in many years peace now prevailed in the territory. At the request of the Nama leader Jan Jonker, Hahn agreed to mediate between him and Maharero. The two chiefs met on 27 May 1870 in the parsonage at Otjikango (Barmen). Also present the following day at the signing of some kind of peace treaty were the missionaries Diehl, Irle, Böhm and Viehe. This particular peace lasted ten years.

Böhm, the only missionary in Damaraland who could understand the Bergdamaras' language, brought the Gospel to them from Ameib. Very soon quite a number of them were baptised, and they independently built a small church, of which they were extremely proud. The church also served as a school building. Daniel Cloete encouraged the children to learn, and his eldest daughter Anna lent a hand in the school. Eventually, a Bergdamara woman who had been taught by Mrs Böhm at Ameib also assisted at the school.

Mrs Böhm accompanied her husband on one of his journeys to Okambahe, and her visit elicited great excitement on the part of the Bergdamaras. They proudly displayed all the clothes they had made and showered presents on her. Their huts now contained all kinds of kitchen utensils previously unknown to them.

Like many other groups, the Bergdamaras eventually had to yield to the vicissitudes of nature. The rain stayed away and the river dried up. Part of the tribe was forced to move away, and the mission work suffered. They scattered even wider after 1880, when war again erupted between the Namas and the Hereros, and the Bergdamaras found to their dismay that both groups posed a threat to them. A splinter group moved to Okosondje, while another group left for Walvis Bay, where Böhm would some time later again preach the Gospel to them. In 1886, the missionary Baumann succeeded in resettling a number of Bergdamaras at Okombahe, thus saving this section of the tribe from extinction.

Little is known about the Böhms' personal circumstances at Ameib. In addition to Johannes, who was born at Salem, they had seven other children, six of whom were born at Ameib, and the seventh while the family

stayed at Otjimbingwe. The children were: Friedrich (Fritz), born on 29.8.1868, Emma Barbara Rosina (Emma), born on 19.5.1870 (she might have been named after the sailship that had brought Böhm to South West Africa), Catharina Emilie Hedwig (Hedwig), born on 28.5.1872, Maria Amalia Minetha (Maria or Mary), born on 31.12.1873, Johanna Caroline (Caroline), born on 8.4.1876, Carl Friedrich Otto (Otto), born on 25.9.1878, and Immanuel, born in 1880, who died of malnutrition during the Nama-Herero war that had broken out shortly before his birth.

Böhm recorded Emma's birth thus: "Today a daughter was born to us." His wife had travelled to Otjimbingwe for the confinement. The house in which Emma was born was later occupied by the imperial commissioner Dr H E Göring, father of the well-known Nazi leader Hermann Göring.

In times of illness the family had to fend for themselves. It was customary for missionary institutes to include some form of rudimentary medical training in their courses, and Böhm probably had to rely on the knowledge thus gained at Barmen. The children were often on the verge of death, especially when dysentery struck. Much-feared diseases such as malaria, and especially small-pox, wreaked havoc, particularly among the Nama tribes. The missionary was their last hope, and even he had little to offer them.

"At first, I administered aconite and belladonna and, if these were ineffective, quicksilver together with sulphur. If the patient complained of a blinding headache, I increased the belladonna. Something that repeatedly struck me, was the fact that none of the cured ever returned to thank me."

The family was not spared its own share of accidents. On 23 October 1873 Böhm was struck on the head by a heavy beam. "That I did not fall dead under it, as all my men thought, is quite incomprehensible to me. The Lord be praised. He sent His angel to deflect the terrible blow."

The following year, the family travelled to Berseba for the annual Mission conference. As usual, they travelled along a dry riverbed. It had, however, earlier rained higher up in the mountains, and suddenly they were engulfed by a wall of water, some five to eight meters high. Mrs Böhm acted promptly to save her family and servants. Even so, they lost all their oxen and the wagon with its load. They eventually recovered some of their possessions, since the flood subsided just as quickly as it had developed,

Böhm manifestly went to great lengths to give the people in his care, especially the children, a proper education. In the school he took it upon himself to teach the more advanced classes. He spoke Nama and Dutch with his pupils, and in this way also improved his own proficiency in these languages.

Mrs Böhm gathered the women and girls under her wing. She had mercy on neglected children, taking them into her home and teaching them how to sew and cook. Her endeavours to raise their moral standards bore fruit to the extent that some of the girls eventually had a beneficial influence on the community. Mrs Böhm must have grown very attached to some of her protégées, as is evident from one of Böhm's diary entries: "I am sorry that the little girl has gone. ... My dear wife has been in tears about her for several days. When I tried to comfort her, she answered: 'Well, I was so fond of her'."

In time, the Böhms had to start thinking about the education of their own children. When Johannes turned eight, they made plans to send him by boat to Germany for his schooling. They decided to travel with him to Cape Town, from where he would journey to Europe on his own. The family, consisting by now of the two parents, Johannes (8), Fritz (6), Emma (4), Hedwig (2) and Maria (1), left by ox-wagon for Walvis Bay, where they boarded a ship for Cape Town. They spent some time in Stellenbosch prior to Johannes's planned

departure for Germany. During their stay, a rampant fire razed part of Stellenbosch, including the house in which the Böhms were staying, in the process destroying all their belongings. Their loss was probably



responsible for the decision no longer to send Johannes to Europe. After enrolling him at Stellenbosch, the remainder of the family returned to Ameib.

*From left to right: Fritz, Mrs Bohm holding Maria, unknown Nama child, Emma, Böhm holding Hedwig, and Johannes. (The photo was taken in Stellenbosch in 1874.)*

On 1 February 1876, the missionary Bernsmann opened a school for missionaries' children at Otjimbingwe. At first, the pupils numbered only seven, and they attended school for two hours each day of the week. Since the school could accommodate the children only for a few years, they had to continue their studies either in Stellenbosch or in Germany. The school at Otjimbingwe was the first German school in South West Africa.

In 1877, Fritz, Emma and Hedwig (who was only five at the time) all attended the missionaries' school. A letter from Fritz to his father, dated 18 July 1877, reads: "Emma always cries when we remind her of having failed to say good-bye to you. Aunt Büttner gave Hedwig a lovely wax-doll. Its head is cracked, however, and much of

its hair is missing. ... I wrote an exam on Thursday, and scored 5. Christoph scored 13 and Hedwig 16. Hedwig does not yet know all the letters but she is already quite familiar with the first page of the ABC book ... "

The following year (1878), when Fritz was ten years old, it was decided that he should join his brother Johannes in Stellenbosch. The Böhms arranged for Johannes, whom they had not seen in four years, to travel by ship from Cape Town to Walvis Bay, where the entire family would visit together before the two boys, Johannes and Fritz, again left for Cape Town. Böhm describes the journey from Ameib to Walvis as follows in a letter to the Mission: "I experienced virtually the same problems and difficulties as the Apostle on his journeys, and his description of his travels in 2 Corinthians 11: 26 could just as well have applied to my latest trip to Walvis Bay .

At the start of the journey, early in 1878, the oxen were already thin, since it was very dry. Grazing and water were scarce along the route, and because of the heat the party travelled mainly at night. On the last leg to Heigamchab, the animals had to go without water or nourishment for two entire days. They were exhausted upon reaching Heigamchab, where the unreliable Nama herdsman allowed the milking cows, which had been taken along to provide milk for the children, to stray. One night the party lost its way because the wagon drivers went off to sleep on the sly, and left the small wagon-leaders to their own devices. With the final, totally barren stretch of some 60 km through the sand dunes to Walvis Bay ahead, Böhm realised that the oxen would never make it. He decided to leave the one wagon behind and to use only the fittest animals to pull the remaining wagon.

Their problems were not, however, at an end upon reaching Walvis Bay, since there was no water or grazing there either. The Nama herdsman immediately had to drive the oxen and slaughter-stock they had brought with them back through the desert to Heigamchab. This journey too was beset by mishaps. One night, the group again lost its way, and the herdsman once more allowed some of the oxen to stray among the dunes, but eventually they and the remaining oxen managed to reach Heigamchab.

Böhm had the following to say about the family's stay at Walvis Bay: "A few days after our arrival at the bay, the ship that was bringing our dear Johannes docked. He looked well and gave us much pleasure in the fortnight we spent together."

The trek included a Nama boy named Petrus who, after having begged to accompany the Böhms, was instructed to help look after the livestock. He was completely unreliable, however, and during the journey allowed some of the oxen he was supposed to lead to the water to die. After obtaining the necessary permission from Petrus's uncle, Böhm punished him by giving him a hiding.

When the family's meat supplies in Walvis Bay began to dwindle, Böhm decided to send Petrus to Heigamchab with another trek for some of the slaughter-stock. Böhm described what happened next: "On the way there everything went well, since he lay on top of the wagon, sleeping. At Heigamchab the driver apparently did not give him enough to eat, whereupon he caught one of my goats ... slaughtered it and devoured it. He then took four he-goats and joined a wagon en route to Walvis Bay, but again got onto the wagon and fell asleep. That evening the people he was travelling with told him to get down and drive his animals if he did not want them to fall behind. He found it more comfortable on top of the wagon, however. The next morning, of course, the goats were nowhere to be seen. Well, since his stomach was full, he lay down behind a dune, calmly continuing his nap. Upon arriving back two days later, his first words to me were: 'Give me some tobacco so that I can smoke'. I retorted: 'Get out of my way so that I do not yield to the temptation to cause you bodily harm!' ... Since consequently we had no meat left to eat, we did as the Catholics do, and ate fish." Fortunately, the goats later made their own way back to Heigamchab.



Towards the end of the fortnight, which had passed very quickly, Böhm continued his account: "By this time the ship had returned from Sandwich Harbour, and had been quickly offloaded. It was time to say goodbye. This was easier than we had expected, since now Friedrich would at least be accompanying his brother to Stellenbosch, and Stellenbosch is a beautiful place. According to Johannes it is the best place to live in, apart from Ameib. 'Mama', Friedrich said, 'I must not cry, but I promise that I will return to Walvis Bay in three years' time to visit you.' We had to bear up as best we could to make the farewell easier for everyone. Only Emma, Friedrich's playmate with whom he liked to play and argue, broke down and cried well into the night."

August Sycholt

*Aerial photograph of the present-day road between Walvis Bay and Swakopmund*

The time had come to return home, and the oxen were fetched from Heigamchab. Palgrave, the magistrate, recommended that they accompany him along the shoreline to Swakopmund, 35 km to the north, from where they could follow the river bed to Heigamchab. This route was much shorter than the 65 km over the sandy plains. Böhm at first hesitated because the route was unfamiliar to him, but he decided to take the risk. In order not to become bogged down in loose sand, they travelled so close to the edge of the sea that the waves broke beneath the wheels of the wagon. Initially the going was good, but later the sand became so loose that the oxen dared not stop for fear of sinking into the sand up to their stomachs. The wagon was sometimes submerged in sand up to its axles, and on one occasion they had to dig for an entire day to excavate the wagon and oxen. The

children, however, thoroughly enjoyed the journey along the sea and, once back home, repeatedly asked when they could again travel along the shoreline, prompting Böhm to retort: "Become like the children!"

The party finally reached Swakopmund, where the oxen had to be rested for three days before they could proceed to Heigamchab. Here they again stayed over for three days. "The most difficult part of the journey was behind us and I thanked God from my heart." Böhm's gratitude, it turned out, was precipitate. It was the old story of unreliable herdsman and oxen that strayed and died. Sometimes they had to dig for two hours in the river bed to find water for the animals. They finally arrived back at Ameib, exhausted but grateful, in March 1878.

Böhm travelled often during his stay at Ameib. An important mission conference was convened each year for all the missionaries of the Rhenish Mission Society in South West Africa. These gatherings afforded the missionaries the opportunity to hold incisive talks about mission work, while their families were able to meet socially. Because of the large distances that separated the mission stations, such a conference was a major event, to which everyone looked forward. The first few conferences were held at Otjimbingwe, but subsequently different venues were selected, such as Ameib in 1877.

Apart from the annual conference, Böhm also went on an annual "preaching journey", generally at the beginning of each year. His travels took him to unexplored parts of Namaland, and he kept accurate records of the topography and weather, and of the tribes he visited. Since he travelled by ox-wagon, he was away from home for periods of up to three months at a time. Sometimes he found it necessary to stay with a particular tribe for a while. Mrs Böhm accompanied her husband to the annual conferences, but remained behind at the mission station with the children when he left on his other trips.

Towards the middle of 1877, Böhm and another missionary, Bernsmann, embarked on an important journey to the Kaokoveld. The northwestern part of the country was at the time still unexplored and sparsely populated, and they were the first whites to explore the region.

The spring at Ameib, which had shown signs of drying up about a year earlier, had by now dwindled to such an extent that Böhm had to start thinking seriously about a new site for the tribe. They decided to explore the region to the north, as far as Sesfontein. A party of eighteen men, thirty oxen, six horses and twelve dogs, with two wagons, left Ameib on 4 June 1877. Although they planned on hunting extensively, they also took along about a hundred slaughter rams. The wagons contained bedding, clothing, rice, flour, coffee, sugar, gunpowder, lead, casks with water, pots, axes, spades, saws, drills, hammers, chisels, nails, wood-screws, iron-files, and various kinds of equipment to maintain the wagons and, where necessary, to clear the way.

After travelling for eleven and a half hours, they outspanned at a spot where they hoped to locate water, only to find that there was none. The thirsty oxen strayed during the night to the Omaruru River, four hours' trek from there. The party could continue their journey only the following afternoon, after the oxen had been brought back. Their next stop was at Okombahe, home of the Bergdamaras. They stayed there until 8 June. A trek of fourteen hours brought them to Ais, where they also failed to find water, so that they were compelled to proceed with the weary oxen until they reached the Ugab River. Once again the oxen strayed, and Böhm decided that they needed to be watched at night. Their next stop was at Anigab. At times, the route became so steep that a man with a stick had to be stationed next to each ox to drive it along. In many places, they first had to chop down large trees and break up massive rocks to clear the way. Every now and then the draught ropes snapped, while the wagons broke down regularly.



Böhm's account continues: "On numerous occasions we came across tracks of elephant, lion, giraffe and other kinds of game, and were able to shoot a fair number of animals. A few days ago, we shot some giraffes. Although the amount of meat yielded by a giraffe equals that of two oxen, it is rather tough. Both wagons were filled with meat, but to conserve our supplies we lived virtually on giraffe meat alone. Everyone could eat as much as he liked. Although the meat agreed with the others, it settled like a rock in my stomach and I became ill. I consulted my medical book. It said: 'Like heals like'. I took this to mean that rocks or stones had to be used to alleviate the pressure of the 'rocks' in my stomach, and I picked up a large number of rocks. Instead of eating them, I rolled them out of the way. By way of a change I chopped down trees that obstructed the way and rolled them out of the way ... Once I had started to perspire, the 'rocks' in my stomach started to melt and the pressure diminished."

For a few days they travelled along the bed of the Hoab, and then along the Hoanib. The rivers contained water in places, and where the party was unable to scale the river banks they first had to build rock causeways to enable them to cross the stretches of water. On other occasions they had to put in a virtually superhuman effort to scale steep banks and cliffs. One day, the pot with grease was left behind, and part of the group had to turn back to look for it. When they finally reached Sesfontein on Sunday 8 July, the group spontaneously started to sing "Nun danket alle Gott". The return journey commenced ten days later, and they arrived back at Ameib on 4 August.

Böhm's travels, especially the journey described above, enabled him to make a valuable contribution to geographical data on South West Africa. His detailed reports to the Mission Society in Barmen contained the first written descriptions of certain river beds, while he added the names of many places and springs to existing maps. He made notes of heights above sea level and determined, for example, that the Erongo Mountains stretched further to the north than was commonly believed. Detailed sketch maps of the routes he had followed, and a description of the topography of previously unexplored areas, such as the Kaokoveld and Damaraland, were published in the journal *Petermans Geographische Mittheilungen* (1878), and in the *Rhenisch Mission Atlas* (1878), thus introducing the outside world to the Kaokoveld and Damaraland.

Böhm's chief scientific contribution was, however, in the field of meteorology. From 1865 onwards he kept detailed notes of weather conditions and temperatures in the territory. These observations were published by the then noted geographer F von Danckelmann in the journal *Mittheilungen von Forschungsreisenden und Gelehrten aus den deutschen Schutzgebieten* (1888). The Standard Encyclopedia of Southern Africa hails Böhm as the pioneer of meteorological research in South West Africa.

His acute perceptive faculties also enabled him to make an important contribution to anthropological research. He supplied ethnological descriptions of various Nama tribes, as evidenced by his valuable anthropological collection in the Mission's museum at Barmen. It was at Sesfontein, for example, that he encountered the Ovatjimbos, who inhabited this remote and desolate area. "They are Hereros who no longer own any livestock and live only on game, grass seeds and wild pears. By custom, each Herero is obliged to own livestock. Once he has lost or has been robbed of all his possessions, he is called Ovatjimba (actually, the singular is Omutjimba). After again acquiring animals, he is reinstated as an Omuhherero."

As mentioned earlier, the journey to Sesfontein was embarked upon mainly because the spring at Ameib was drying up. Soon there was no longer sufficient water for all the people and animals, and the grazing had deteriorated. Böhm believed that weirs could help preserve the water supply, but no one was prepared to help him build them. Soon after their return to Ameib, part of the Swartbooi tribe under the leadership of Petrus Swartbooi, who had accompanied Böhm to Sesfontein, decided to move there. Böhm opposed the move, since

he believed that anyone living in such a remote place as Sesfontein could not receive proper spiritual care. Petrus, however, was adamant.

In 1879, another part of the tribe split off and went to live at Omaruru, leaving behind only Abraham Swartbooi and his followers. In 1880 they too moved, settling at Karibib. In May of that year, the spring finally gave out, and Böhm and his family were forced to move to Otjimbingwe, leaving behind a deserted Ameib, where they had suffered so many trials and tribulations.



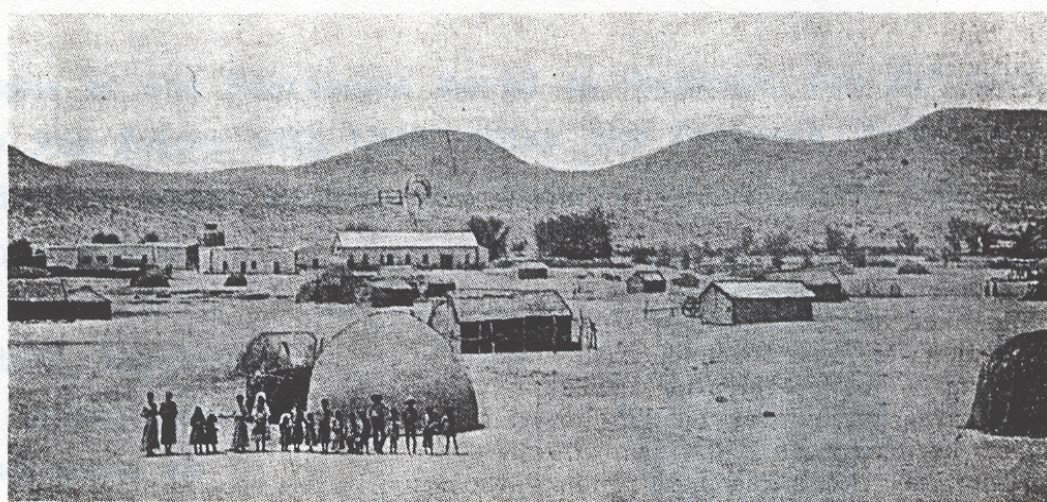
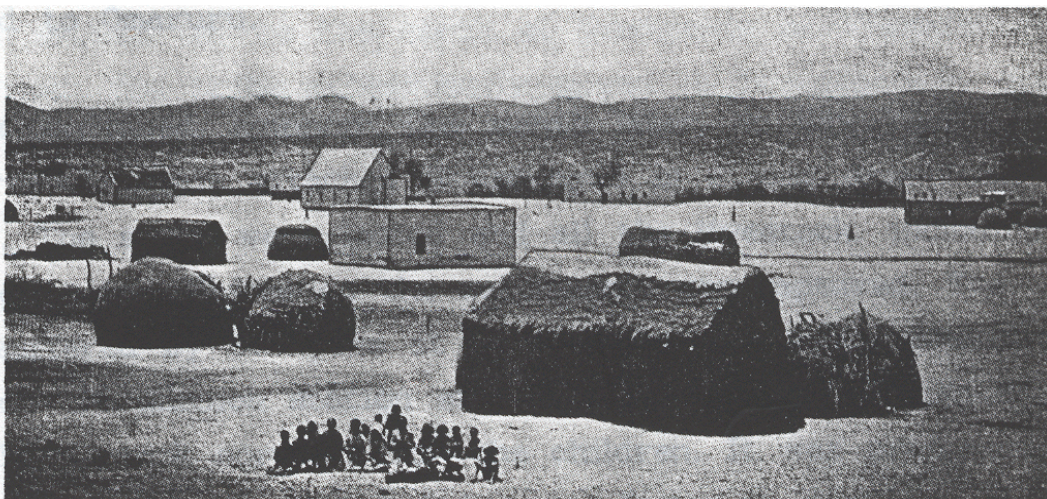
## Chapter 5

### OTJIMBINGWE 1880-1881

The old animosity between the Hereros and Namas flared up again shortly after Böhm's arrival at Otjimbingwe. In several incidents towards the middle of 1880, Herero and Nama herdsmen killed one another in disputes over grazing and the use of waterholes. The ten-year-old peace was clearly in jeopardy. The Rhenish missionaries requested the German government to prevail on England to maintain law and order in South West Africa, whereupon the British government replied that it would take no responsibility for anything that happened outside the boundaries of Walvis Bay.

Towards the middle of August 1880, thirty Herero herdsmen were shot and killed by Namas at Gurumanas. Maharero retaliated by ordering his followers to kill any Nama on sight. This resulted in an attack on the Namas at Okahandja during the night of 22 August in which 200 of them were massacred. War had finally broken out.

The Swartboois, who viewed themselves as friends of Maharero, feared that they would not be spared the inevitable ensuing bloodshed. To ascertain the true state of affairs, Böhm travelled to Omaruru, where he secured the Hereros' assurance that they harboured no ill feelings towards the Swartboois, and would leave them in peace.



*Otjimbingwe 1870*

J Bauman

On 30 October 1880, the Hereros heard, however, that a number of Swartboois had captured forty-eight head of cattle from a Herero cattle station to the east of Otjimbingwe. A number of other incidents so undermined the Swartboois' sense of security that they left Karibib, taking refuge in the mountains at Ubib. Hereros from Otjimbingwe and Omaruru subsequently advanced to Ubib. In the ensuing battle, the Swartboois suffered heavy casualties, including the wife of Abraham Swartbooi, their leader. Finally, the Hereros were forced to beat a retreat, leaving more than forty dead behind.

Petrus Swartbooi and his group did not participate in the battle at Ubib, but decided to turn to advantage the knowledge that most of the Herero men who lived at Otjimbingwe were absent, by launching a surprise attack on Otjimbingwe, looting all the livestock and burning down the huts. The women and children sought refuge in the house of the missionary Bernsmann, where Böhm and his family were also staying at the time. While the group was still engaged in raiding the settlement, they received news of the death of Abraham Swartbooi's wife at Ubib. This so enraged them that they surrounded the missionary's home, demanding the immediate surrender of the Herero women and children. Böhm, however, took up position in the open doorway and called out that he would surrender them only over his dead body. This brought the Swartboois to their senses, and Petrus promised that no female blood would be shed. The women and children were then allowed to flee unhindered to Omaruru.



The hostilities continued, however. One month later, on New Year's Day 1881, the Swartboois again attacked Otjimbingwe in a long drawn-out day of terror. The shops were looted and all the livestock, including those belonging to the whites on the settlement, were captured. The heavy losses suffered by everyone at Otjimbingwe once more brought great misery to the mission station, since the inhabitants no longer had any slaughter stock or milk for the children. It was presumably during this period that the Böhms' baby son Immanuel died.

During 1881, some of the Swartboois moved to Rooibank, not far from Walvis Bay, to join forces with their allies, the Topnaars. From there they continued their raids against the Hereros. Otjimbingwe, as well, was subjected to another attack.

By February 1881, Abraham Swartbooi had

grown weary of the constant warfare. He promised to call off all future raids, provided his tribe were allocated land where they would be safe from the threat posed by both the Hereros and the Namas. He offered to gather together his own dispersed subjects and those of his dangerous brother Petrus, and to move with the entire tribe to an area allocated to them by Maharero.

Maharero did not favour peace negotiations. He held that one should kill one's enemies rather than negotiate with them. Eventually, however, he acceded to Hahn's request to leave the Swartboois in peace if they settled far to the north, at Sesfontein or Fransfontein in the Kaokoveld. The tribe subsequently moved to Fransfontein, where their descendants are still living today.

*Maharero*

H Vedder



## Chapter 6

### WALVIS BAY 1881-1907

Böhm was transferred to Walvis Bay in October 1881. There were signs of progress once the British government had gained control of the harbour. A magistrate was dispatched from Cape Town to maintain law and order, and the volume of ocean traffic increased.

A small group of Topnaars living in the vicinity of the bay, and whose staple diet consisted of fish, helped to offload the ships. A group of coloureds also eventually settled in the area. Initially, the missionary Brincker of Otjimbingwe was responsible for the spiritual welfare of these people.

In 1879, Brincker started a fund for a church building at Walvis Bay. The wooden structure was built in Hamburg and shipped to Walvis Bay, where it was erected close to the shore. Its inauguration on Christmas Day 1880 was attended by a crowd of about a hundred people, among them twenty whites. Böhm's transfer to Walvis Bay was probably attributable in part to the fact that he was already familiar with the splinter group of the Swartbooi tribe that had moved to the bay early in 1881.

In 1880, according to a document inserted under the cornerstone of the church and published by the *Namib Times*, Walvis Bay consisted of two shops, quite a large goods shed and five homes. Fresh water was nonexistent. The small and indigent Topnaar settlement of Sandfontein lay to the east behind sand dunes of 2 500 meters. The settlement's huts and shelters had been erected next to the usually dry bed of the Kuiseb. The Topnaars dug wells in the river bed and used donkeys to cart the water to Walvis Bay, some 5 km away. The water was so brackish, however, that it was hardly suitable even for washing. Every five to six weeks, a ship brought fresh water from Cape Town. The only source of moisture was the grey fog that usually hung menacingly over the sea and sometimes, as it still does today, swept in over the parched desert landscape for weeks on end.

There was no quay, and the boats were forced to anchor as close to the shore as possible to enable passengers and goods to be transported by rowing boat, or simply to be carried through the water. The operation was sometimes a precarious one. In April 1859, the wife and four children of the missionary Rath drowned on disembarking after a visit to Cape Town.

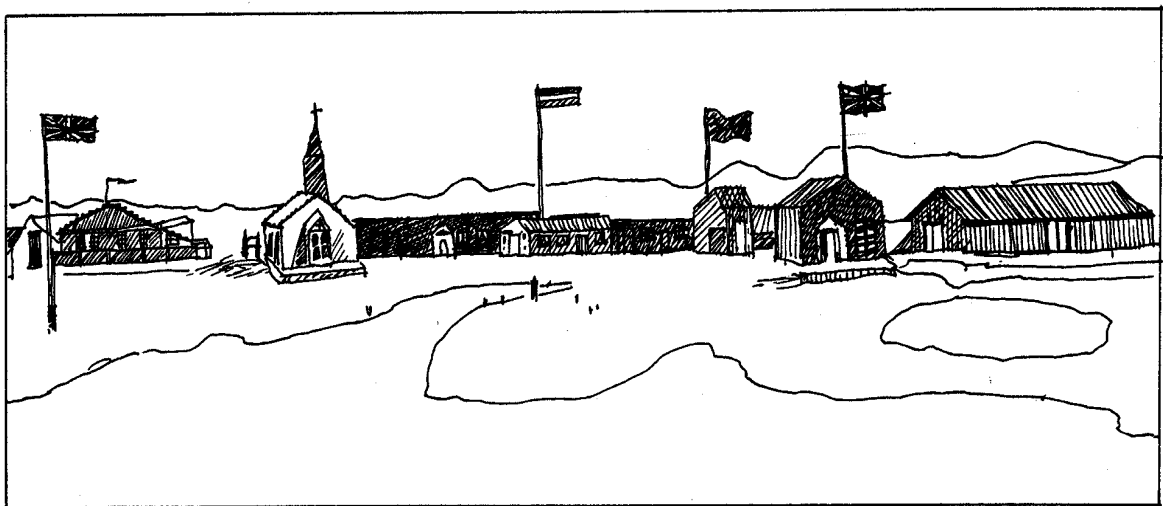
Since Walvis Bay was situated on the verge of the desert, nothing grew there at the time. Mrs Böhm once wrote: "We have a pelargonium in the window. At the moment it has two blossoms, much to the delight of the children, who are not used to such a sight."

The lack of vegetation naturally also meant a scarcity of firewood. Kindlewood was obtainable only from the Topnaars, who transported it to the bay by donkey-cart from the Kuiseb riverbed.

Brincker, as the chairman of the Rhenish Mission's board of management in South West Africa, had this to say about Böhm's transfer to Walvis Bay: "The brother concerned (Böhm) will have to move to Walvis Bay. This will entail considerable sacrifices on his and his family's part, and he will be entitled to very little in life. He will have to depend on the Cape for all his supplies, even for his drinking water, and milk will be a scarce commodity. Until now, it has been a place of death, both internally and externally, and we can scarcely expect the situation to improve."

Böhm was sent to Walvis Bay not only to work among its inhabitants, but also to serve as a link between the outside world and the missionaries in the interior, in particular to ensure that provisions and other goods arriving from Germany and elsewhere reach their destination safely. At first there was little contact between South West Africa and Europe. After 1878, ocean traffic between Cape Town and Walvis Bay increased, and from 1891 more ships began to ply the route between Walvis Bay and Germany. It was Böhm's duty to ensure that post and goods from Germany were forwarded to Otjimbingwe and other mission stations B a task that was seriously hampered by the constant wars between the Namas and the Hereros. Böhm also served as the general treasurer of the Rhenish Mission Society in South West Africa.

Travellers who had to stay over in Walvis Bay were often put up by the hospitable Böhm family. In fact, their home eventually developed into a kind of inn for people waiting for a ship or for transport into the interior. This placed a heavy burden on Mrs Böhm, who had to spend long hours in the kitchen preparing meals for their numerous visitors with the skimpy means at her disposal. In a letter to Hedwig, dated 19 April 1886, she wrote: "We again have a large number of visitors. Since meat is not always available, one has to rack one's brains to find an alternative. The taste of the preserved meat sometimes leaves much to be desired, but if fish is



unobtainable, it is the only alternative." Schwabe's book relates how the Böhms once put up an entire division of soldiers who had disembarked in Walvis Bay under the command of Lieutenant C von Francois.

*Walvis Bay around 1881*

O van der Merwe

Schwabe also told an interesting story about a ship that had run aground during a heavy fog at Swakopmund. "After a while, we could see a few swimmers fighting for their lives in the fearsome waves, gripping casks under their arms in an attempt to reach the shore but only one ... managed to reached the beach. All the others ... drowned. It was a sad day, because we could only stand by helplessly on land, unable to help the drowning swimmers. The last corpse washed up after three days, and all were buried in the newly laid out cemetery. The funeral service was conducted by the missionary Böhm, who ... had travelled from Walvis Bay for the occasion."

Böhm was thus called upon to assist others, even though his own family had to do without many necessities, partly because they could not afford them, and partly because such commodities were unobtainable. It is known that after Hedwig had married and settled in the Tarkastad district, she had to send her parents butter.

Böhm cultivated vegetables at Rooibank. Meat was sometimes plentiful and sometimes, owing to stock diseases, unobtainable. The cattle were particularly prone to lung sickness, which killed off many of them. Many of the territory's inhabitants lost all their stock in the rinderpest epidemic of 1897.

Disease afflicted both animals and humans, and many people succumbed to yellow-fever and malaria. Great sacrifices were demanded of missionaries and their congregants, many of whom lost dear ones while still in the flush of youth. At one stage, fifty people in Swakopmund alone were suffering from malaria, and Maria was dispatched to provide nursing assistance. Mrs Böhm reported as follows in a letter dated 14 March 1898: "Fever is rampant in Swakopmund and elsewhere in the country. Uncle Dannert and Wulfhorst of Ovamboland are both lying ill in Omaruru. Wulfhorst has blackwater fever. They both want to visit us after they have recovered." Three months later, on 7 July, she wrote: "You have probably heard about the state of emergency in Damaraland. It seems as if the dreadful disease afflicting the cattle is poisoning the water and the air. The Diehls, Viehes and Dannerts have been suffering from fever for months on end, and Mrs Viehe has gone out of her mind on two occasions. Diehl writes that he has never experienced such misery and suffering. On several occasions they have had to bury four to six or seven members of the congregation on a single day."

Because of the fog that so often descends on Walvis Bay, it has a cooler climate than the rest of Namibia. The sick were often brought there to recuperate. Mrs Böhm and her daughters had no choice but to care for them, prompting Böhm on one occasion to refer to his home as the "sanatorium".

The inhabitants had to rely on one another not only when they were ill but also during confinements. Mrs Cleverly, the magistrate's wife, gave birth every year. Mrs Böhm was at Rooibank when Mrs Cleverly's tenth child was due. A policeman arrived with a note to inform the Böhms that Mrs Cleverly had died in childbirth. "Since Papa still had to search for his spectacles, he requested me to read the note. My distress at the news that Mrs Cleverly had died unattended, except for the old and (according to some) drunk Christina and Mrs Green, made it nearly impossible for me to read the note. It appears that after she had been delivered of the baby she had again developed birth pains ... but failed to tell anyone. No one really knows what she died of. Mrs Günsig maintains that there was still an unborn baby, because she was still just as large after the birth as before."

Perhaps the missionaries' greatest sacrifice was the need to part with their children at a very tender age. The children could attend school at Otjimbingwe for a few years, but then had to leave the territory for further schooling. The girls were sent to Stellenbosch, while the boys were eventually sent to Germany. Any further upbringing on the part of the parents had to be continued per correspondence:

"Please do not neglect to attend the evening services. The Lord may be looking for you there, especially Emma, who is currently in the confirmation class."

"Something else is bothering me. I am not at all pleased about the fact that you are already talking of and writing about young men. Please oblige me by completely avoiding such talk B both at home and in your letters ... I can only say: Alas, woe betide the young girl who becomes preoccupied with such matters too early on."

"Please take the small ones under your wing and be a little mother to them."

"Pray regularly B also for your parents."

"I read in your letter that you often find it difficult to observe Sundays in the way expected of young ladies there. ... I admit that if one has already attended two Sunday services a young person should be permitted to go for a walk ... Could it really be wrong simply to enjoy the fresh air under God's free heaven? Even so, I still feel (as you so well suspect) that you should deny yourself, out of love rather than sacrifice, so that you may not offend them. Then your self-denial will be blessed by God."

And so the children grew up far away from their parents, who could only guess at their development. "Christine was here, and so were Simpson and Annatjie. Christine is a young lady already B as I suppose you are, too, by this time ... and it is difficult to visualise you thus."

"Otto has written us a very sensible letter. I shall have to stop thinking of him as a little boy, my little fledgling in the nest."

Academically, the children did extremely well, in spite of being separated from their parents so early in life. Böhm's pride is manifest in the following report to the Society about his children:

Johannes:	medical doctor in Tübingen
Friedrich:	student of theology in Canterbury
Emma:	married to Schlimm in Memel (Germany)
Hedwig:	teacher in Tarkastad in the Cape Colony
Maria:	teacher in Walvis Bay
Caroline:	at the Rhenish Institute, Stellenbosch
Otto:	at the Johanneum, Mors

Many of Mrs Böhm's letters bear testimony to her deep longing and concern for her children: "We haven't heard from you in months, and you can imagine how much we are longing for you. Friedrich's letter warmed his mother's heart and I would dearly love to hear the same from you."

Shortly before Emma's marriage in 1892, she wrote to Hedwig: "... I must conclude ... sadness fills my heart. It is a terrible thought to bear: We may never see her again! May the Lord help me." Her premonition proved correct, for she never saw Emma again after her marriage. A letter to Maria in 1898 reads: "Alas, Emma is breaking my heart. I would dearly love to go there now."

"Oh, how I would love to take all my children under my wing so that could have them with me every day." "I am always sad when I receive letters from Germany, because I would so much like to see everyone again, but it is impossible for me to travel alone, and Papa says as long as I have to contribute toward Otto's expenses I cannot use my income to pay the fare."

Once the Böhm boys had completed their primary education, they were sent to Germany, and never saw their mother again. Johannes later specialised in ophthalmology. He married Toni Fuchs and settled in Heilbronn, Germany, where he opened an eye clinic and became a popular and respected physician.

*Hedwig (13), Emma (15) and Maria (12)  
during their school years at Stellenbosch*







*Johannes*



*Friedrich*



*Otto*



*Hedwig, Emma and Caroline in 1913 at the time of their visit to their father in Germany*

S

*Caroline and Maria  
together with their parents*



After his arrival in Europe, Friedrich (Fritz) developed an interest in Roman Catholicism, and even considered joining the priesthood, much to his parents' consternation. Instead, he eventually became an Anglican minister. During the First World War he worked for a time in his father's previous parish of Walvis Bay. He married Laura (Josie) Weatherby on 2 April 1907, and spent the rest of his life as an Anglican minister in South West Africa and South Africa.

Otto was sent to Germany in 1888, at the age of ten, where he eventually qualified as a mechanical engineer. He married Julia Tschartoryski, a Ukrainian girl. They first lived in Moscow, where Otto became an affluent citizen. He was interned in Russia, however, during the First World War, and lost most of his possessions. At the close of the war he returned to Germany, living first in Heilbronn and later in Königsberg. After again having lost all their possessions during the Second World War, the couple finally settled at Ilshoven, where according to their daughter Irene they spent their final years leading a humble existence, like the rest of the townspeople.

After Emma had attended the Rhenish Institute at Stellenbosch for some time, she returned to her parents in Walvis Bay, where she helped her mother with the household, until her marriage to Albert Schlimm on 25 February 1892. Although at first Mrs Böhm was not quite happy with the relationship, she went to endless trouble with the wedding preparations. Just before the event she wrote to Hedwig: "Fortunately, the wedding dress is finished. It cost , 4-10-0. I am not I too happy about the cost, for it could have been cheaper. Instead of a hot meal at the reception, we shall be serving various cold meats, sausage, leg of mutton, brawn, salads, apple cakes, tea, wine, etc." After their marriage, the Schlimms settled at Werden, near Heidekrug in Germany, where they kept a mill.

After attending school at Otjimbingwe, Hedwig left for the Rhenish School in Stellenbosch, where she matriculated and, at the age of 17, qualified as a teacher in 1889. She subsequently taught at Tarkastad, where she met a local farmer, Danie Venter. They travelled to Walvis Bay in 1894, where they were married by her father on 25 April of that year. She had not seen her parents since leaving for Stellenbosch as a young girl. After the wedding, the couple returned to their farm in the Tarkastad district.

Maria, having completed her education at Stellenbosch, returned to Walvis Bay, where she intermittently served as a governess to the Cleverlys, and taught the Namas. Towards the end of 1904 she married Johann Albert Schaible, a German-American missionary who had come to South West Africa to work among the Ovambos. The continuous wars prevented him from proceeding any further than Walvis Bay.

After Schaible had married Maria, it was decided that he should take over from Böhm at Walvis Bay as from the beginning of 1905, whereupon Böhm left for Rooibank. At the outbreak of the First World War, the Schaibles were forced to leave Walvis Bay temporarily. The family went to live in South Africa, but was able to return in January 1916. During their absence, the congregation was served by Schaible's brother-in-law, Friedrich Böhm. In February 1921, the Schaible family moved permanently to the United States of America, where Schaible had accepted an invitation to serve a white congregation.

Caroline also returned to Walvis Bay after completing her stint at Stellenbosch. She not only became her mother's righthand, especially in nursing the sick and running the large household, but also helped to educate the Namas. During the illness that led to his wife's death in 1899, Böhm wrote as follows about his daughter: "Caroline has become a real little housewife, and is excelling at her task ... In December she had 13 people at her table, taught, and in addition cared for her sick mother ." She later married Mannie Venter, a brother of Hedwig's husband Danie, settling with him on a farm in the Tarkastad district.



As the children were growing up and leaving home one by one, Böhm unreservedly committed himself to the work in Walvis Bay. His efforts were not in vain. The number of Christians increased to such an extent that the church building had to be extended in 1896 to accommodate 500 people. In Schwabe's words: "The missionary Böhm's achievements among the Topnaars are admirable. Church and school attendance is good, and the families Cleverly, Koch and Böhm are vying with one another in helping, training and serving the Namas."

Mrs Böhm played an invaluable part in the missionary work, and more particularly in the school. One of the Society's officials had this to say about her: "The maternal concern of dear sister Böhm has been an important force in persuading the children to attend school. Each day she gives them something to eat from her kitchen, and she sees to it that the poor are clothed. The school master Franz Gertze also faithfully performs his duties under the helpful guidance of Böhm. Yesterday the official, who also serves as the school inspector, conducted his annual inspection. Afterwards, he expressed his satisfaction with the behaviour and progress of the pupils."

It is clear from the letters that the Böhm children sometimes sent their mother contributions in aid of her activities. A letter dated August 1892, written by Böhm to Hedwig at Tarkastad, where she was teaching at the time, contains the remark: "Many thanks for your contribution towards Mama's soup kitchen and sewing group."

In spite of their trials and tribulations in the desert, Mrs Böhm never lost her love of German culture and especially of music. She encouraged her children to practise music, as evidenced by a letter to Hedwig in 1886: "I am so pleased that you are playing Mendelssohn. I am also familiar with some of his music. You should attempt the 'Messiah'." Two years later she wrote: "I would like you to take singing lessons, for you know that I myself still love to sing, like a real nightingale. I often ask Emma to play my old songs for me, and then we sing together, as always."

During the last decade of the nineteenth century, the area around Walvis Bay and Swakopmund experienced unprecedented progress. Ocean traffic increased, the Germans started to exploit the rich guano fields along the coast, a start was made with the construction of a railway line across the barren, daunting sandy plain to the interior, while Walvis Bay and Swakopmund were connected by rail.

The developments had both a beneficial and a detrimental impact. Adverse social consequences included an alarming increase in immorality and alcohol abuse. Böhm was particularly concerned about excesses among the Namas. With the magistrate's aid, he succeeded in prohibiting the sale of liquor in Walvis Bay for a while, but the ban had to be lifted eventually. At times, up to a hundred congregants were put under the church's discipline and prohibited from taking Communion.

Böhm's work was not confined to Walvis Bay. He also accepted responsibility for the outstations at Sandwich Harbour and Rooibank, and eventually also for Swakopmund. Sandwich Harbour is a large coastal lake, situated some 25 km from Walvis Bay. It has a small outlet into the sea, and ships plying between Cape Town and Walvis Bay sometimes entered the small harbour, particularly to take on fish.

Rooibank, also known as Schepmannsdorff, was a mission station established in 1845 by H Schepmann. Unfortunately, his valuable work among the Topnaars was terminated by his early death in 1847. He was succeeded by Jan Barn. After Barn's death, Rooibank was served by the missionary Eggert from Heigamchab. The wars brought considerable hardship to Eggert and his family. After Heigamchab and Rooibank had each twice been attacked by the Namas and the San between 1866 and 1867, the Eggert family, having lost all their possessions, fled to Sandwich Harbour, where they boarded a ship for Cape Town. For ten years Rooibank

was without a missionary. In 1878, following Britain's annexation of Walvis Bay and of Rooibank, the missionary Baumann was sent to Rooibank. The mission work flourished under him, but when war again broke out between the Namas and Hereros in 1880, most of the Topnaars moved away from Rooibank, so that eventually Baumann was also compelled to leave. From 1883 onwards, Rooibank became Böhm's responsibility. He carefully repaired the collapsed church building, and held regular services. After his retirement at the end of 1904, Böhm continued to live at Rooibank, until his departure for Europe in 1907.

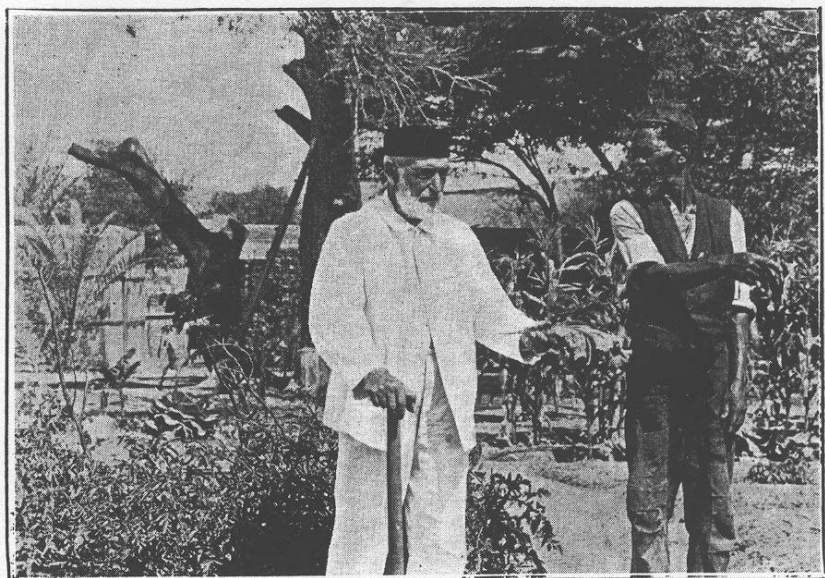
In 1884, the entire South West Africa, with the exception of Walvis Bay, was put under the protection of the German Empire. The Germans subsequently developed Swakopmund as a harbour under their control B a development that attracted an increasing number of people to the town. Further expansions followed after the railway line had been extended to Swakopmund in 1898, so that at the turn of the century its population exceeded that of Walvis Bay.

Since there was no proper church in Swakopmund, Böhm was required to hold services there as well. He agreed, and from 1895 was responsible not only for marriages and funerals, but also for holding a service in the town every two months. While the railway line was under construction, he undertook a trip along the line to meet and spiritually serve construction workers.

In a letter dated 29 December 1899, Böhm wrote that, while in Swakopmund, he held morning services for the Germans and afternoon services for the indigenous population. "Mr Keitz regularly makes a hall available to the whites. The indigenous population's service is held in a government store. On arriving at the station, I am fetched by horse-cart to stay either with friends or at the hotel, at the expense of the government. Later, I am taken back to the station again."

The German government's district official had this to say in 1900 about Böhm's work in Swakopmund: "He (Böhm) conducts all religious activities in Swakopmund from Walvis Bay ... even though the journeys back and forth (sometimes) on horseback are not easy for a 67-year-old man. He receives no remuneration for his work and, although his annual income is only 3 000 marks and he has a large family, he has paid over all voluntary donations B which in the weeks must have totalled some 500 marks B to the church-building fund."

past



*Böhm and one of his assistants (in about 1905)*





*The church building in Walvois Bay, built in 1880, and extended by Böhm in 1896*



*The Evangelical Lutheran church in Swakopmund for which Böhm had raised the first funds*



Böhm's responsibilities in Swakopmund increased to such an extent that he eventually requested the Society to appoint a minister or missionary for the area. The Society responded in 1897 by appointing Böhm himself, with the special assignment of working among the whites in Swakopmund. Böhm declined the invitation, however. It is known that the whites of Walvis Bay had drawn up a petition, requesting that their "beloved spiritual keeper" remain with them.

Böhm's wife, in a letter to her daughter Hedwig dated 11 February 1898, described the events thus: "They want to send us to Swakopmund as the first minister ... Leutwein (also) requested this. But I say: 'No thank you!' I have no desire to work with people who might constantly harbour a grudge because Papa is a mere missionary and a humble person. My heart belongs to the Namas."

The Society did not accede to Böhm's request that someone else be sent, because it was suspected that Walvis Bay might fall into German hands, so that with its natural harbour it would become the principal town in South West Africa. Böhm continued to serve Swakopmund, and when he decided to leave Walvis Bay after his retirement in 1904, having served as a missionary for forty years, the Swakopmund community presented him with a silver fruit bowl. His touching letter of appreciation to an area official named Fuchs contains the following paragraph: "So much honour has been bestowed on me this past year that I, humble being, must ask myself: Why should this be, why have I been so honoured, what have I done that others could not have done better? All the goodwill shown to me I owe to God's grace, of which I am not worthy. For this I glorify and praise Him. I shall never forget the regard of Swakopmund's inhabitants for both my work and my person."

After Böhm's departure, the Society finally appointed a minister to serve Swakopmund. The substantial building fund accumulated by Böhm enabled the congregation to begin shortly afterwards with the erection of a church building, on land that Böhm had previously acquired from the government.



*The Rev Emil Venter, great-grandson of Böhm, with the silver fruit bowl, handed down to him,*

*which had been given to Böhm in recognition of 40 years' service*

Towards the middle of 1898, the Böhms left for South Africa on a well-earned holiday. They visited Cape Town and Stellenbosch, where they stayed with colleagues of the Rhenish Mission Society and friends. They spent most of their time, however, with Danie and Hedwig in Tarkastad, where they set eyes for the first time on three of their grandchildren.

Mrs Böhm hoped that at some stage they would be able to travel to Germany, so that she could visit her family, whom she had last seen before her marriage, and naturally also her sons and Emma, and their children. This, sadly, was not to be. On 20 November 1898, shortly after their return to Walvis Bay, she wrote to Maria, who was away at the time: "I dread the nights, because of asthma, and none of the medicine is helping. According to the doctor I shall not get better. A few weeks later, she again wrote to Maria: "I am gravely ill and do not know how it shall all end ...I am convinced that death is not far away." In the same letter, Böhm confided that his wife was also suffering from a serious kidney ailment, and that Caroline was looking after everyone.

In a letter dated 13 February 1899, Caroline informed Hedwig of her mother's death: "Dear Mama was called away from us in the early hours of Tuesday (9 February)". Böhm's entry in his diary reads: "This morning early, at five minutes to three, the Lord gently and peacefully called away my dear wife. She was a faithful partner in marriage, in the missionary work and in the upbringing of our seven children. She was an exemplary housewife. During her life she bestowed abundant love on everyone and was abundantly loved in return. After all her labour, she is now resting with the Lord, who loved her and bought her with his blood B the Lord whom she loved, and served, often to the point of exhaustion but without giving up." Maria Catharina Böhm was buried in the cemetery at Walvis Bay.

*Hedwig Lombard, great-granddaughter of Böhm, next to what remains of the grave of Maria Catharina Böhm in the Walvis Bay cemetery's garden of remembrance*



Böhm's tribulations, however, were not over yet. Barely a month later, on 18 March, Caroline contracted malaria, running such a high fever that they feared for her life. Dr Richter was hastily summoned from Swakopmund. He kept vigil at her bedside until the crisis had passed and she was on the way to a slow recovery.

At the beginning of 1900, Böhm again left for South Africa on a few months' long leave. During his absence, the missionary Haneveld substituted for him in Walvis Bay and vicinity.

As Walvis Bay and Swakopmund expanded, the Society realised that the elderly Böhm could no longer manage the increasing workload. They decided to appoint someone else to take over the Society's financial affairs, and early in 1902 dispatched the missionary Nyhof to Walvis Bay to assist Böhm. His stay was of short duration, however. Towards the end of 1904, Böhm informed the Society by letter that he would like to retire at the end of that year. He reported that he lacked "any means", and the Society duly approved his request for a pension.

After retiring, Böhm went to live at Rooibank, where he lent a hand with the spiritual work. He again visited his children in the Cape Colony in March 1907, utilising the occasion to attend the marriage of his son Fritz early in April of that year. Fritz took him on a tour of various places in the Western Cape that formed part of his ministry.

## Chapter 7

### EUROPE 1907-1918

Shortly after his return to Rooibank, Böhm again began to pack his bags. The *DWSA Zeitung* of 11 May 1907 contains the following report of his departure by boat for Germany in May 1907: "The oldest European inhabitant of our coast, the missionary Böhm, who has worked continuously in South West Africa for the past 43 years, has left for Germany on the steamship *Prinzessin*. Missionary Böhm, who is now 73 years old, left Bremen harbour on 8 October 1863 on the sailing vessel *Emma*, arriving in Walvis Bay on 9 January 1864 ... Upon retiring in 1905, Böhm was replaced by his son-in-law, the missionary Schaible. Böhm went to live at Rooibank until he decided to leave for his Heimat, so that he might visit his children who live in Germany. He is not sure whether he will remain in Germany or return to South West Africa. We take this opportunity to wish this kindly, amiable and hard-working man a pleasant journey."

His return to Germany made it possible for Böhm to make a joyful rediscovery of Europe, with its established culture and technological advances. His first destination was Heilbronn, where he was lovingly welcomed by Johannes and his wife Toni, with whom he soon established a close relationship, and who would eventually take care of him.

In July he visited Emma and her family at Werden. After a separation of fifteen years, the meeting was a momentous occasion, described as follows by Böhm in a letter to his children in South Africa: "Naturally, there was great joy at the arrival of a father and grandfather. The son ran to fetch cigars and matches, Kathe brought a footstool for my feet, little Thea plumped the cushions on the chair so that grandfather could sit back comfortably ... I praise God for good health and the happiness at being with my children and grandchildren."

En route to Werden, Böhm stopped over at Michelbach, his home town, to visit a half-sister. How the world had changed! "Everywhere there is a lot of construction work going on; there are factories everywhere; every inch of land in the country is being utilised; there are pastures with dense, tender grass; waving cornfields; the cities and towns are surrounded by orchards; the knolls, hills, and mountain sides are covered by vineyards; the streets have been firmly and solidly compacted like tennis-courts, with elevated sidewalks running alongside. The windows of the farmhouses gleam; on the farms I noticed many agricultural implements. The telephone lines have been extended to the most remote agricultural towns; the people seem well-groomed, are neatly dressed and courteous." .

Böhm also had relatives in Stuttgart. "The streets of the cities are brightly lit. When you go to bed, you simply pull a cord, and the room is instantly bathed in electric light. After snuggling down under the comfortable covers, you simply pull the cord again to darken the room."

In 1908, Otto secured a job as an industrial engineer at a German factory in Russia, not far from the Black Sea, where Böhm visited him and his family in about 1910. In the course of 1911, Böhm again wrote from Heilbronn: "May to August are not the most beautiful months in Walvis Bay. The days are mostly cold and foggy, interspersed with a few warm days that are characterised by sandstorms. Oh, how beautiful it is here at the same time of year ... Everything turns green, blossoms and grows. The birds sing day and night. The strawberries, cherries, gooseberries and black currants are already starting to ripen ... Sundays, too, are extremely pleasant. All the shops and places of work are closed. Festively clad crowds mix on the streets and on their way to church, and the beautiful churches are packed to capacity. Others take their families on drives to the country or to the beautiful woods in the vicinity. Here there are no poisonous snakes or scorpions, no dangerous wild animals to frighten them, only the occasional hare, jackal, buck and deer."

Although advanced in years, Böhm nevertheless led a full life in Europe, surrounded by his loving children, grandchildren, and newly acquired circle of friends. On his frequent travels he made careful observations and wrote everything down meticulously. In 1913, much to his joy, his daughters Hedwig and Caroline travelled from South Africa to visit him. Thus, after many years, the family Böhm, with the exception of Maria and Fritz, were reunited. Throughout all his travails in Africa, Böhm had never lost his good nature, sincerity and special sense of humour B attributes that had enabled him to remain cheerful, to take an interest in everything around him, and to establish good relations with people, be it the most primitive inhabitant of South West Africa or the most cultivated citizen of Europe.

On the eve of his departure to Moscow to visit his son Otto, Böhm compiled the following will, dated 30 June 1914: "God willing, I am leaving tomorrow, 1 July, for Moscow. I am old and I do not know what might befall me. In the event of my death I therefore bequeath my possessions as follows:

1. My sofa and all my other possessions currently in the home of my son, Dr Johannes Böhm, with the exception of the money in my savings accounts, I bequeath to my son, Johannes Böhm.
2. The money in my savings books, that is the books of Oberamts, Heilbronn, and of the Gewerbebank, Heilbronn, must be paid out to my son Johannes to cover my funeral expenses. He may use any balance as he wishes.
3. My cousin, the dealer Friedrich Birk in Stuttgart, has borrowed 1 000 marks from me (the IOU is attached). On 8 December 1913 I also lent 1 000 marks to the firm Friedrich Fuchs in Cannstadt. Of this money, my daughter Maria Schaible (nee Böhm), wife of a missionary in Walvis Bay, must receive 1 000 marks. A 1 000 marks must also go to my son, Friedrich Böhm. Any outstanding monies or interest must go to my son, Dr Johannes Böhm. During my life all my other children received amounts equal to those hereby bequeathed to Maria and Friedrich. I hope that none of my children will feel that they have been wronged. I loved them just as much as they have lovingly looked after and cared for me. I thank God, however, for faithfully leading us all, just as He leads all of us over the threshold of death unto Him, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
4. Since my retirement, I have been receiving a pension from the Rhenish Mission Society. They have always treated me well, for which I am grateful. Any unpaid pension funds upon my death should be retained by the Society and applied towards missionary work.

I charge my eldest son, Dr Johannes Böhm, with the execution of the clauses in my will, which I have drawn up while in good health and of sound mind."

While Böhm's fear that he might die proved unfounded, another threat hung not only over him, but over all of Europe. The First World War broke out on 1 August 1914, shortly after Böhm's return from Moscow. Having lived through so many years of war in Africa, he was not about to be spared its brutal consequences in the final years of his life. The war brought death to ten million people, and poverty and misery to many others. The Böhms, too, experienced their share of grief, anxiety and separation.

Otto was interned in Russia, and his wife and child had to spend several years with Johannes and his family in Heilbronn. The sons of Johannes and Emma also fought in the war. A letter to Böhm's daughters in South Africa, dated 3 July 1917, reads: "Hans and Toni are in good health. Hans Jr is with his ship. Herbert is fine and in Siberia." A subsequent letter reads: "Nearly a year has passed since my last letter and I have not heard from

Hedwig in nearly as many months. What, in fact, can one write in times such as these? Just about the only news is that one is still alive."

In his final letter to his daughters, dated 25 February 1918, Böhm wrote: "We must all bear our share of the suffering, cares and grief of this world war. Yet we are no worse off than you: one's distress is never greater than one's Helper. For has our Lord and Saviour not said that the reward of suffering vastly with Him is great glory? He has promised, however, always to comfort us. You should also entrust Him with all your concerns, for He will provide for you. Nowadays I so often call to mind the beautiful song:

*Ich hab in guten Stunden  
des Lebens Glück empfunden  
und Freuden ohne Zahl.  
So will ich denn gelassen  
mich auch in Leiden fassen.  
Welch Leben hat nicht eine Qual.*

In good times I have  
experienced great happiness  
and countless blessings in life.  
Therefore I would like to  
bear patiently with suffering.  
What life is without cares?

Böhm did not live to see the end of the war, for he died after a long illness on 15 May 1918, at the age of 85, at the home of his son Johannes at Heilbronn.

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord ... they will rest from their labour, for their deeds will follow them."  
*Rev 14:13*



## LITERATURE

- Baumann, J (red.): *Van Sending tot Kerk. 125 Jaar van Rynse Sendingarbeid in Suidwes-Afrika*. Karibib. 1967.
- Böhm, F. *Letter*. 1877. Unpublished.
- Böhm, JFA. *Mein Lebenslauf*. Otjimbingwe. 1864. Unpublished.
- Böhm, JFA. *Tagebuch von Salem*. 1863-1866. Unpublished.
- Böhm, JFA. *Tagebuch von Ameib*. 1867-1875. Unpublished.
- Böhm, JFA. & MC. *Letters*. 1884-1918. Unpublished.
- Driessler, H. *Die Rheinische Mission in Südwestafrika*. Gütersloh. 1932.
- Geographischer Monatsbericht: *Mittheilungen aus Justus Perthe's Geographischer Anstalt*. 1878.
- Levinson, O. *South West Africa*. Cape Town. 1976.
- Malan, JS. *Peoples of South West Africa-Namibia*. Pretoria. 1980.
- Moritz, W. *Aus alten Tagen in Südwest*. Heft I. Bielefeld. 1980.
- Metzkes, J. *Otjimbingwe. Aus alten Tagen einer Rheinischen Missionsstation im Hererolande. Südwestafrika*. 1849-1890. Windhoek. 1962.
- Potgieter, DJ (ed.): *Standard Encyclopedia of Southern Africa*. Vol. II. Cape Town. 1970.
- Rautenberg, H. *Das alte Swakopmund*. 1892-1919. Swakopmund. 1967.
- Rheinische Missions Berichte: *Jahresbericht*, 1871, 1878, 1883, 1889, 1891, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1900, 1901, 1903, 1904.
- Schlimm, ACJ. *Geschichte der Familie Schlimm*. Unpublished.
- Schwabe, K. *Im deutschen Diamantenland*. Berlin. (Date unknown.)
- Schwabe, K. *Mit Schwert und Pflug in Deutsch Südwestafrika*. Berlin. 1904.
- Strassberger, E. *The Rhenish Mission Society in South Africa*. 1830-1950. Cape Town. 1969.
- Vedder, H. *South West Africa in Early Times*. Windhoek. 1985.
- Von Danckelmann, F. *Inhaltsverzeichnis Zu den Mittheilungen von Forschungsreisenden und Gelehrten aus den deutschen Schutzgebieten*. Band I. Berlin. 1898.
- Von Rohden, L. *Geschichte der Rheinische Missions-Gesellschaft. Aus der Quellen mitgeteilt*. Barmen, 1888.